

“Arunachala! Thou dost root
out the ego of those who
meditate on Thee in the
Heart, Oh Arunachala.”
- *The Marital Garland of
Letters*, Verse 1.

Publisher:
T. N. Venkataraman
Sri Ramanasramam
Tiruvannamalai

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(QUARTERLY)

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THE AIM OF THIS JOURNAL WILL BE TO SET FORTH THE TRADITIONAL WISDOM OF ALL RELIGIONS AND ALL AGES, ESPECIALLY AS TESTIFIED TO BY THEIR SAINTS AND MYSTICS, AND TO CLARIFY THE PATHS AVAILABLE TO SEEKERS IN THE CONDITIONS OF OUR MODERN WORLD.

Contributions for publication should be addressed to ‘The Editor, THE MOUNTAIN PATH, Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, Madras State.’ Manuscripts not published will be returned on request.

Messages

HIS HOLINESS SRI JAGADGURU MAHASAMSTHANAM,
Sharada Peetham of Sringeri

His Holiness was very glad to know you are starting publication of a quarterly journal entitled “The Mountain Path” from January 1964 and that its aims are “to set forth the traditional wisdom of all religions and of all ages especially as testified to by their saints and mystics.”

His Holiness is pleased to convey His Blessings for success of your journal.

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DR. S. RADHAKRISHNAN,
President, Indian Republic, Roshtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi-4.M

I am glad to receive your letter and know that from January 1964 you are starting a Quarterly Journal “The Mountain Path”.

I wish you success in your endeavour.

With best wishes.

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SRI BISNURAM MEDHI,
Governor of Madras, Raj Bhavan, Madras.

I thank you for your letter of the 15th October 1963. I am happy to know that under the auspices of Sri Ramanasramam, it is proposed to publish a quarterly journal called “The Mountain Path”. If it preaches the fundamental unity of all religions and the message of universal love to mankind, it will have served a useful purpose.

I wish the quarterly every success.

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SRI V. V. GIRI,
Governor of Kerala, Raj Bhavan, Trivandrum.

It is only in the fitness of things that Sri Ramanasramam has decided to bring out a quarterly publication “The Mountain Path” to impart the spiritual knowledge and age-old wisdom which the seekers and seers have been espousing in all countries and ages. Sri Ramana Maharshi, the Sage of Arunachala, taught the message of universal brotherhood and goodwill among all. The realisation of the ‘Brahman’ is not beyond us. An aspirant yearning to learn, understand and follow the great truth ‘Thou Art That’ becomes liberated. I am sure your journal will be doing a distinct service in propagating the need for inter-religious harmony and awakening the hidden treasures, of Godliness in every individual.

DR. C. P. RAMASWAMI AIYAR,
Vice-Chancellor, Annamalai University, Delisle Ootacamund.

Sri Ramana Maharshi was one of the authentic Seers that have appeared from time to time in India whose mission was to enable people to recover their mental poise and to give them guidance on the fundamental problems of existence.

I am very glad that a quarterly journal entitled “The Mountain Path” is about to be started and I wish it all success and prosperity.

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SRI C. R. PATTABHI RAMAN,
Union Deputy Minister, Labour & Employment and Planning, New Delhi.

I am glad that the Quarterly “Mountain Path” under the editorship of Sri Arthur Osborne, is being started. I wish the endeavour all success.

As eternal and ‘sanathan’ as our ancient Dharma, are the writings about Sri Ramana Maharshi because he was a realised soul. Everyone who comes across Ramana literature is bound to be happy and elevated.

May the journal grow from strength to strength and may it be given to you all to carry on your good work for many years to come.

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SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM,
Chief Minister, Government of Madras, Fort. St. George, Madras.

The teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi take their rank among the great scriptures which, embodying the Truth and the perceptions of seers, shed light on the path of earnest aspirants. The advent of a new journal shedding new light on the teachings of Sri Maharshi will be welcomed not merely by the devotees of Sri Bhagavan, but by every one who has faith in the spiritual traditions of India.,

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SRI L. N. BIRLA,
Birla House, New Delhi.

I am glad to know that you are shortly going to start a Quarterly journal.

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SRIC. RAJAGOPALACHARI,
T. Nagar, Madras.

I have read the aim of the journal that is being inaugurated. The aim deserves the cooperation of all good and wise men.

MATAJI (MOTHER KRISHNA BAI) OF ANANDASHRAM,
Kanhangad, South. Rty.

Pujya Mataji got your loving letter of the 15th instant and has noted that you are starting the publication of a quarterly journal "The Mountain Path" which will be edited by Sri Arthur Osborne.... She sends her good wishes and prays for the complete success of the journal.

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MOTHER RAMA DEVI (OF MANGALORE),
Camp: Bangalore.

It is heartening to observe that you have embarked upon the publication of a religious journal for the furtherance of the cause of spirituality. Dissemination of ancient wisdom through the medium of a journal is one of the easy and effective means of service available to doers of good. Association with elevating thoughts is the avenue to self-purification. It provides conditions congenial to the awakening of the hidden potentialities of the human mind. Let your journal serve as a path-finder for weary minds in the pilgrimage to the sacred shrine of supreme beatitude. Blessings and best wishes.

“THE MOUNTAIN PATH”

(A Quarterly, issued from Sri Ramanasramam)

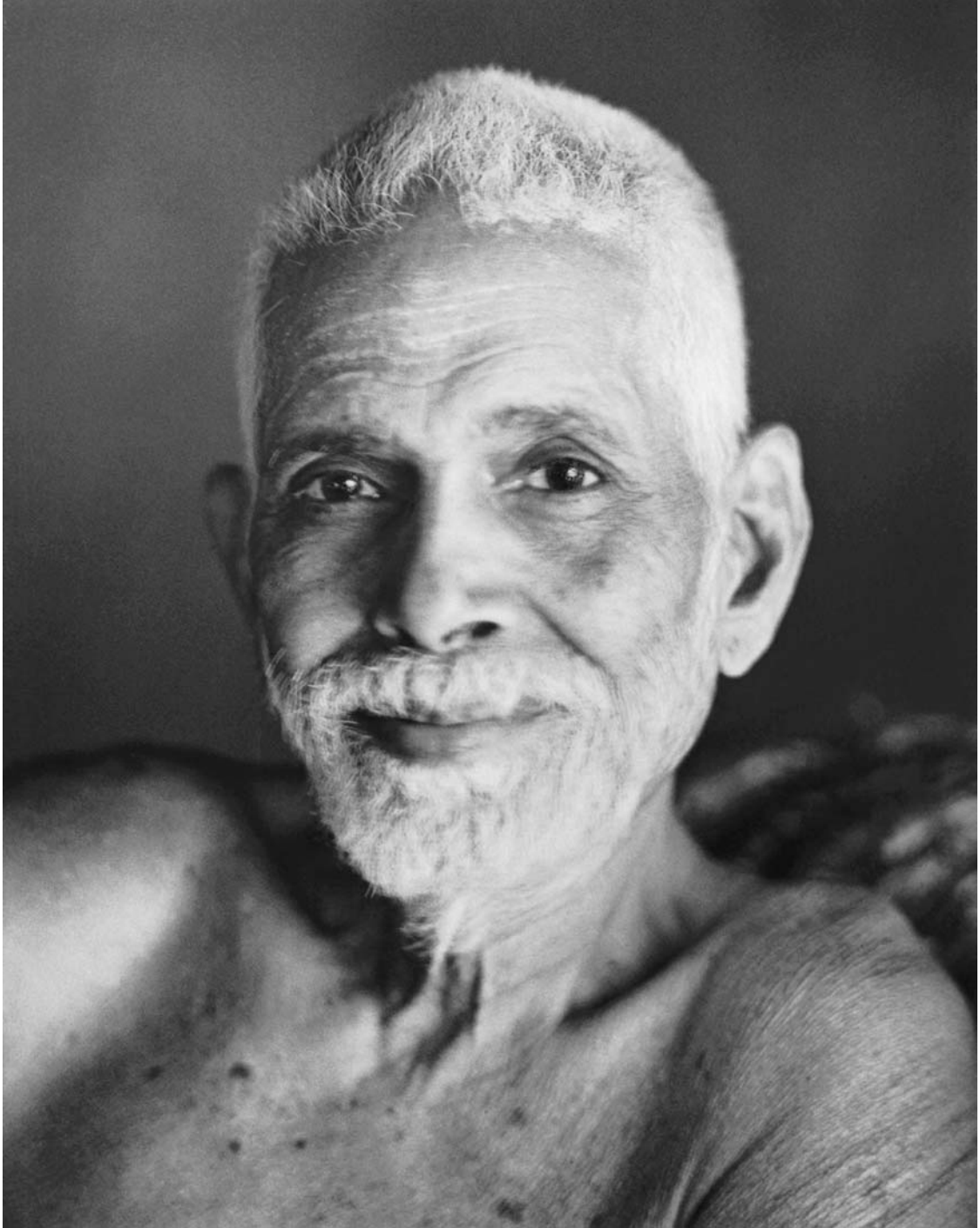
‘The Mountain Path’, a quarterly journal, is issued from this Ashram as one means of maintaining the high spiritual and intellectual level that Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi’s teaching demands. The aim of this journal will be to set forth the traditional wisdom of all religions and all ages, especially as testified to by their saints and mystics, and to clarify the paths available to seekers in the conditions of our modern world.

We hope that devotees of Sri Maharshi and others also who are drawn to the perennial spiritual wisdom will lend us their support.

We also find that many devotees who are able to come to Tiruvannamalai only rarely or not at all, are eager for Ashram news. For their benefit we shall issue an Ashram news bulletin as a supplement to each issue. Usually this will be a small part of the journal ; however, in this issue, we wish to bring readers up-to-date with an account of the Maharshi’s nirv4,dna and of Ashram developments since then.

T. N. VENKATARAMAN,
Publisher.

THE PEARL OF PURITY



Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi



The Mountain Path

(QUARTERLY)

Editor: Arthur Osborne

VOL. 1

JANUARY, 1964

No. 1

TO THOSE WITH LITTLE DUST

(EDITORIAL)

It is related (and the story is no less significant whether historically true or not) that after attaining Enlightenment the Buddha's first impulse was to abide in the effulgence of Bliss without turning back to convey the incommunicable to mankind. Then he reflected: "Some there are who are clear-sighted and do not need my teaching, and some whose eyes are clouded with dust who will not heed it though given, but between these two there are also some with but little dust in their eyes, who can be helped to see; and for the sake of these I will go back among mankind and teach." It is for those with little dust in their eyes that this journal is intended.

Its purpose is to show that there is a more satisfactory state than that of ignorant, confused, unguided, frustrated modern man, and a higher, more satisfying and more durable alternative for him than any provided by wealth or luxury, art or music, or the love between man and woman; that such a state can be attained in his lifetime, and that the purpose of all religions has been to lead men towards it, although in many different ways. I say 'towards' rather than 'to' because even though the supreme state may not be

attained in this lifetime, the mere approach to it can bring a peace of mind and sense of well being not otherwise attainable.

Mystics have often had unsought glimpses of a higher or the highest state; those who are psychic have out-of-the-body and other experiences closed to the ordinary man; but all this is of little importance in the quest for Realization. Such powers or experiences may be a help at certain stages of certain types of path, but they may also be a hindrance and distraction, like the sirens whom Odysseus heard but against whom he made his crew plug their ears. If the pleasures of the physical world are seductive, those of the subtle world are certainly no less so. Christ said that if a man attains the kingdom of heaven all else shall be added to him; but that is after attaining. If he seeks all else beforehand he is not likely to attain. It is safer to have one's ears plugged.

The quest is no shorter and no less arduous for those who have such powers and experiences than for those who have not. Realization is not something like music, for which some are by nature more gifted than others; it is fundamentally

different, since music requires the development of a faculty which is stronger in some and weaker in others, whereas Realization is the discovery of and identification with the Self that has the faculties.

It is very hard, perhaps impossible, to say who can and will understand. It has certainly nothing in common with intellectual ability as commonly understood. Indeed, the scriptures of the various religions agree in warning that neither intellect nor learning is any qualification. They also can be a hindrance. "It is rather the unlearned who are saved than those whose ego has not yet subsided in spite of their learning."¹ "The humble knowledge of oneself is a surer way to God than deep researches after science."² A scientist can fail to understand spiritual science, a philosopher be unreceptive to the Perennial Philosophy, a psychologist remain ignorant of what underlines the mind. On the other hand, a spiritual Master may or may not be an intellectual: Ramana Maharshi was, but Sri Ramakrishna was an ecstatic with the mind rather of a peasant than a philosopher, while St. Ignatius Loyola was temperamentally so averse to study that it required immense effort for him to gain the degree without which the Church would not allow

1 *Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi, Supplementary Forty Verses*, v. 36. Riders and Sri Ramanasramam.

2 *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas A Kempis.

him to teach, and he was middle-aged before he did so.

A Master may feel who are his people and draw them to him, but even that is no guarantee of a good outcome to the quest: Judas was among the closest followers of Christ and Devadatta among those of Buddha, while Mohammed is told in the Quran: "You cannot save those whom you will but those whom God wills."

What is required is rather willingness to open one's heart to the truth, to surrender oneself, give up one's ego, conceive of the possibility of its non-existence, give up one's life for Christ's sake. That is why the Quran speaks of unbelievers rather as perverse than ignorant, saying that even if an angel from heaven came down to explain to them they would not listen.

Theoretical understanding is not enough. Neither is belief in the sense of a conviction that this or that will happen after death. What is needed is to set one's hand to the plough, as Christ put it, to undertake the true alchemy, transmuting the dross in one's nature to gold. This is the quest of the Sangraal, the search for the elixir of life, the eternal youth of the Spirit. It is the pathway of the heroes, the way from trivialities to grandeur. Its consummation is like waking up from a dream into the ever-existent Reality.

All religions postulate the three fundamentals, the world, the soul and God, but it is only the one Reality that manifests itself as these three. One can say 'The three are really three' only as long as the ego lasts. Therefore to inhere in one's own Being, where the 'I' or ego is dead is the perfect state.

- Ramana Maharshi - *Forty Verses*, v. 2.

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The *Atman* (Self) is never born and never dies. It is beyond time, unborn, permanent and everlasting. It does not die when the body dies.

- *Kathopanishad*.

THE FEW

By ARTHUR OSBORNE

No argument can pierce the shuttered mind.
Let truth shine forth resplendent as the sun,
Still, crouched in their dark corner, will they find
Some guttering candle till life's day be done.
Even though we sang like angels in their ear
They would not hear.

Those only in whose heart some inkling dwells,
Grown over though it be, crushed down, denied,
Will greet the pealing of the golden bells
And welcome truth when all around deride.
Yet sight has laid a debt upon their will
Not all fulfil.

For even of those who see, only a few
Will have the intrepid wisdom to arise
And barter time's false values for the true,
Making their life a valiant enterprise
To vindicate their heritage long lost,
Nor count the cost.

And out of that so noble fellowship
Questing the Graal upon the mountain peaks,
Well is it if it meet the expectant lip
Of even one persistently who seeks.
Yet is this quest the glory and the goal
Of the awakened soul.

The entire world is God: This is the core of my teaching. First banish egoism; then you will come up to this test. Would you like to know the core of Divine Wisdom? This is my certain answer. Tuka says Rise above the mind to destroy the ego.

- Tukaram

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The result of Knowledge is identity with all; the result of ignorance is identity with the limited being of one's body.

- Shankara, *Commentary on the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*.



THE MOUNTAIN PATH

By M. BHAKTAVATSALAM
(*Chief Minister of Madras*)

‘The Mountain Path’ that Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, are publishing deserves to be a great success, since the quarterly journal aims at setting forth and maintaining the high spiritual and intellectual level that Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi’s teaching demands.

It is evident that the ‘Mountain’ in the caption denotes ‘Arunachala’ and the ‘Path’ is the Ramana-Path, *i.e.* the Path of Self-Enquiry.

The Mountain Arunachala is the *achala tattwa*, commonly known as *nischala tattwa*, upon which, as the screen, runs the entire panorama of manifestation. Seeing the pictures, forgetting the screen, he who sees is in delusion. With the realisation that the screen alone *IS*, comes the Peace of Being, born out of the understanding of Truth. This realisation that the *nischala tattwa* alone is the ever-present Present, is screened off by *avidya* (ignorance). This *avidya*, the knot between *chit*, and *achit*, is cut asunder by the *smruthi* (recollection of the highest), also known as *druva smruthi*. This *smruthi* (remembrance) is Arunachala-*smruthi*, which made the boy Venkataraman into Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, who blessed us all with his benign Presence for over 50 years from Tiruvannamalai.

In his pure Transcendental Existence, he imparted to us the import of *nija mouna bhava* of Lord Dakshinamurthi. He was a living commentary on the Upanishadic Truth and with his plenary experience, he attracted the elite of all religions and creeds to him to confirm to them that in realisation of That, as it is, is the fulfilment of all religions and philosophies.

‘The Mountain Path’ will help us in this *druva smruthi*, perpetual recollection of the highest Truth. I trust in course of time it will become a monthly.

The management of Sri Ramanasramam deserves to be congratulated on launching this journal, as a means of fulfilling Sri Maharshi’s Will, of making Sri Ramanasramam a centre wherefrom will radiate the Light of Sri Maharshi’s teaching and also upon choosing as its Editor Mr. Arthur Osborne who really knows the Maharshi and his teachings and in addition has very good experience in the field of journalism.



REMAIN WHERE YOU ARE

By NAGAMMA

Nagamma is an Andhra lady who was living here in the lifetime of Bhagavan. Her brother also is a great devotee but could pay only occasional visits here, as he was the Manager of a Bank in Madras. Therefore Nagamma formed the habit of writing him reports of the doings and sayings of Bhagavan. Some of these letters have been put together as a book and published by the Ashram,¹ but what follows has not yet been published in English.

10th Sept. 1947

At a quarter to ten this morning, just as Bhagavan was getting up to go for his usual short mid-morning walk, an Andhra young man approached the couch and said: "Swami, I have come here because I want to perform tapas (austerities) and don't know what would be a good place for it. I will go for the purpose wherever you tell me."

Bhagavan did not answer. He was stooping down rubbing his legs and knees, as he often does before beginning to walk, on account of the rheumatism in them, and was smiling quietly to himself. We, of course, were waiting eagerly for what he, would say. A moment later he took the staff that he uses to steady himself in walking and, looking at the young man, said: "How can I tell you where to stay? It is best to stay where you are." And with a smile he went out.

The young man was bewildered. "What is the meaning of this?" he exclaimed. "Being an elderly person I thought he would tell me some holy place where I could stay, but instead of that he tells me to stay where I am. I am now near this couch. Does that mean that I should stay here? Was it to receive such a reply that I approached him? Is this a matter for joking?"

One of the devotees took him out of the hall and explained: "Even when Bhagavan says

something in a light vein there is always some deep meaning in it. Where the feeling 'I' arises is one's Self. Tapas means knowing where the Self is and abiding there. For that one has to know who one is ; and what then does it matter where one stays ? That is what he meant." He thus pacified the young man and sent him away.

Similarly, someone asked yesterday Swami, how can we find the Atma ? "

"You are in the Atma, so how can there be any difficulty in finding it Bhagavan replied.

"You say that I am in the Atma, but where exactly is that Atma," the questioner persisted.

"If you abide in the heart and search patiently you will find it."

The questioner still seemed unsatisfied and made the rather curious objection that there was no room in his heart for him to stay in it.

Bhagavan turned to one of the devotees sitting there and said, smiling " Look how he worries about where Atma is! What can I tell him? What is Atma? It is all-pervading. When I tell him that it is called 'Heart' he says there is no room in it for him to stay. What can I do ? To say that there is no room in the heart after filling it full of vasanas (inherent tendencies and cravings) is like grumbling that there is no room to sit down in a house as big as Ceylon. If all

¹ See the Ashram Book list published in 'Ashram Bulletin', in this issue.

the junk is thrown out won't there be room? The body itself is junk. These people are like someone who fills all the rooms of his house chock full of junk which is not necessary for his body and then complains that there is no room for his body in it. In the same way they fill the mind with all sorts of vasanas and then say there is no room for the Self in it. If all the

vasanas are swept away and thrown out there will be plenty of room and it will all be Atma. Then there will be no such thing as a separate 'I', so what need then for room, or who would occupy the room? Instead of seeking the Self they say 'no room! no room!', just like shutting your eyes and saying there is no sun. What can be done?"

NOTE ON NAMES

The names 'Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi' and 'Arunachala' will occur frequently in this journal. We are therefore inserting a note on their meaning and pronunciation for those readers who are not familiar with them.

'Sri' pronounced 'Shree' is a Sanskrit honorific signifying 'blessed' or 'auspicious'. It has now lost much of its meaning and come to be used before names, much like 'Mr.' in English. Before the name of a Swami or holy place, however, it still has its original connotation.

'Ramana' is an abbreviation of the personal name Venkataramana. The accent is on the first syllable.

'Maharshi' is a contraction of 'MahaRishi', meaning the 'Great Rishi' or 'Great Sage'. The accent is on the second syllable.

'Bhagavan' is the word commonly used for 'God'. It is applied by common consent to one who is recognized as a Divine Incarnation and is the same as the appellation of the Buddha which is commonly rendered in English as 'The Blessed One'. It was usual to address the Maharshi in the third person as 'Bhagavan'. He accepted this usage and sometimes referred to himself so. The accent is on the first and last syllables, the second being slurred over.

Various meanings are assigned to 'Arunachala', the name of the sacred Hill. The third and last vowels are long, the accent being mainly on the third.

A remark may also be in place on the form 'Ramanasramam', which may confuse some readers. The word 'ashram' has found its way into English dictionaries and is therefore the correct English form, whether a correct transliteration of the Sanskrit or not, however, 'asramam' is the Tamil form, and this ashram is registered under that name, which is therefore used for its address.

OUTSIDE THE SCRIPTURES

By DR. T. N. KRISHNASWAMI

A special transmission outside the scriptures;
No dependence upon words or letters;
Direct pointing at the heart of man;
Seeing into one's own nature, and the attainment of Liberation

These are the reflections of a traveller on the Mountain Path laid down by the Maharshi. The Maharshi's wordless doctrine is unlike the usual traditional teachings. There are no creeds to be elaborated, so there is no need for preaching. There is nothing for the mind to theorise or philosophise about. What is needed is immediate, intuitive understanding of the heart. "The intricate maze of philosophy of the various schools is said to clarify matters and to reveal the Truth, but in fact it creates confusion where none need exist. To understand anything there must be the Self. The Self is obvious. So why not remain as the Self? What need to explain the non-self?"¹

What the seeker has to do is rather to unlearn and let go all his preconceived ideas about the Self. Indeed, the Maharshi has been known to say that in the end even the scriptures must be given up and unlearned. "All scriptures without exception proclaim that for attaining salvation the mind should be subdued. And once one knows that control of the mind is their final aim, it is futile to make an interminable study of them. What is required for such control is actual enquiry into oneself by self-interrogation: 'Who am I?' How can this enquiry in quest of the Self be made by means of a study of the scriptures?"²

This reminds one of Chuang Tsu's saying that if one gets rid of small wisdom great wisdom comes in.

1. *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own Words*, p. 15, Rider's edition, p. 10, Sri Ramanasramam edition.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 63/75.

There are no precepts for special austerities, while at the same time indulgence is not condoned. The question always is: who is it that seeks all this. To refer a second time to a Taoist Sage, it is like Lee Tsu's story of the animal trainer who subdued his tigers (the *vasanas*) by treating them quite impersonally, neither gratifying their desires nor provoking their anger.

All thinking is out of place as a means of sadhana. It is not one's true nature. It creates all errors and, what is worst of all, creates, as the father of them a false entity, the ego or individual being. "Concentration is not thinking of one thing. On the contrary it is excluding all thoughts, since all thoughts obstruct the sense of one's true being. All efforts are to be directed simply to removing the veil of ignorance."³

The Maharshi says that the Self is not in books; if it were, anybody might become a Sage by study. Also it is not in any hermitage, and going to live in solitude will not help. "Why do you think you are a householder? The similar thought that you are a *sannyasin* will haunt you even if you go forth as one. Whether you continue in the household or renounce it and go to live in the forest, your mind haunts you. The ego is the source of thought. It creates the body and the world and makes you think of being a householder. If you renounce, it will only substitute the thought of renunciation for that of family, and the environment of the forest for

3. *Ibid.*, p. 127/160.

that of the household. But the mental obstacles are always there for you. They even increase greatly in the new surroundings. Change of environment is no help. The one obstacle is the mind and this must be overcome whether in the home or in the forest. If you can do it in the forest, why not in the home? So why change the environment? Your efforts can be made even now, whatever be the environment.”⁴ Nor is the Self something to be attained at some future date. “No one is ever away from his Self, and therefore everyone is in fact Self-realized: only - and this is the great mystery - people do not know this and want to realize the Self. Realization consists only in getting rid of the false idea that one is not realized. It is not anything new to be acquired. It must already exist or it would not be eternal, and only what is eternal is worth striving for.”⁵

All doctrines are made by the ego and for the ego. The ego flourishes on them. But on the Maharshi's path the very existence of the ego is denied right from the start, both that of the teacher and that of the taught. “There is no ego. If there were you would have to admit of two selves in you. Therefore there is no ignorance. If you enquire into the Self, ignorance, which is already non-existent, will be found not to exist and you will say that it has fled.”⁶

Is there anything in the human body that can be called ‘I’? There are mental and vital processes but investigation reveals no person there to be designated as ‘I’.⁷

The negative process consists of intellectually eliminating the not-I so that one can see that he who eliminates everything else cannot eliminate himself. Such intellectual investigation may

prepare the way for Self-enquiry but is not the enquiry itself.

“*Visitor*: I begin with asking myself ‘Who am I?’ and eliminate the body as not-I, the breath as not-I, the mind as not-I, but then I am unable to proceed further.

“*Bhagavan*: Well, that is all right so far as the mind goes. Your process is only mental The Truth cannot be directly indicated; that is why this mental process is used. You see, he who eliminates all the not-I cannot eliminate the ‘I’. In order to be able to say ‘I am not this’ or ‘I am That’ there must be the ‘I’ to say it. This ‘I’ is only the ego or the ‘I-thought’. After the rising up of this ‘I-thought’ all other thoughts arise. The ‘I-thought’ is therefore the root thought. If the root is pulled out the rest is at the same time uprooted. Therefore seek the root ‘I’; question yourself: ‘Who am I?’ find out the source of the ‘I’. Then all these problems will vanish and the pure Self alone will remain.”⁸

Why was the Maharshi so against thought? Why was he not satisfied with mental investigation? Because it cannot see beyond itself. It is created by the ego and therefore cannot pierce to the Self underlying the ego. But will its renunciation not result in a mere blank? It can, that is what happens in deep sleep. But it can also result in awakening into pure *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, Being-Consciousness-Bliss. This is what is called Realization. “Absence of thought does not mean a blank. There must be someone to be aware of that blank. Knowledge and ignorance pertain only to the mind and are in duality, but the Self is beyond them both. It is pure Light. There is no need for one Self to see another. There are no two selves. What is not Self is mere non-Self and cannot see the Self. The Self has no sight or hearing; it lies beyond them, all alone, as pure Consciousness.”⁹

4. *Ibid.*, p. 78/94.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 23/21

6. *Ibid.*, p. 25/23

7. It will be observed that this is the same as the Buddhist doctrine of *anatta*. (Editor)

8. *Ibid.*, p. 117/146-7

Then does one who has realized the Self remain absorbed in pure, formless Consciousness, oblivious of any outer world? He can; that is the state of trance known as *nirvikalpa samadhi*. But he need not. Full and complete Realization involves return to formal consciousness also, with full perception of the outer world, not as a self-subsistent reality but as a manifestation of the Self. The mind and senses can still cognize; when one says that the mind is dead, that means only that it no longer presumes to imagine, create or originate, as it formerly did. This is the state the Maharshi was in. It is known as *sahaja samadhi*.

“To those who have not realized the Self, as well as to those who have, the word ‘I’ refers to the body, but with this difference, that, for those who have not realized, the ‘I’ is confined to the body, whereas, for those who have realized the Self within the body, the ‘I’ shines as the limitless Self.

“To those who have not realized as well as to those who have, the world is real. But to those who have not realized, Truth is adapted to the measure of the world, whereas to those who have, Truth shines as the Formless Perfection and as the Substratum of the world. This is all the difference between them.”¹⁰

Why is the Maharshi so insistent against the ego? Because the ego is the usurper that claims to be the Self, the mask that conceals the Reality. Its elimination is the only way to realization of the true Self that underlies It. The seeker has no alternative. There can be no chick unless the eggshell is broken. The true Self cannot be realized until the false is renounced. Therefore, the Maharshi says, since this is ultimately

necessary, why not start with it straight away; since you must finally remain as the Self, why not do so from the start; since other paths will lead you roundabout and finally face you with the alternative of Self or pseudo-self, why not go direct and face it here and now?” This is the direct method. All other methods are practised while retaining the ego and therefore many doubts arise and the ultimate question still remains to be tackled in the end. But in this method the final question is the only one and is raised from the very beginning.... Because every kind of path except Self-enquiry presupposes the retention of the mind as the instrument for following it, and cannot be followed without the mind. The ego may take different and more subtle forms at different stages of one’s practice but it is never destroyed. The attempt to destroy the ego or the mind by methods other than Self-enquiry is like a thief turning policeman to catch the thief that is himself. Self-enquiry alone can reveal the truth that neither the ego nor the mind really exists and enable one to realize the pure, undifferentiated Being of the Self or the Absolute.”¹¹

Many hesitate and find this method too harsh, because of all renunciations this seems to them the most severe, renouncing not merely enjoyment but him who desires and enjoys it. But this is a wrong idea. If it were true, a Self-realized man such as the Maharshi would be the most miserable of men, whereas in fact he is the most happy, in pure, unbroken, unalloyed happiness, regardless of whether outer circumstances seem favourable or unfavourable. This is because in renouncing the ego one really renounces nothing except a wrong conception of ‘I’, an error whose removal reveals the eternal Truth and unalloyed happiness that is one’s real nature.” The individual being which identifies its existence with that of the life in the physical

9. *Ibid.*, p. 25/23

10. *Forty Verses on Reality*, vv. 17-18, from *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, Riders, London, and Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai.

11. *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in His own Words*, p. 112/139-40

body as 'I' is called the ego. The Self, which is pure Consciousness, has no ego-sense about it. Neither can the physical body, which is inert in itself, have this ego-sense. Between the two, that is between the Self or Pure Consciousness and the inert physical body, there arises mysteriously the ego-sense or 'I-notion', the hybrid which is neither of them, and this flourishes as an individual being. The ego or individual being is at the root of all that is futile and undesirable in life. Therefore it is to be destroyed by any possible means; then That which ever is alone remains resplendent. This is Liberation or Enlightenment or Self-Realization."¹²

It is to remove this error that the Maharshi prescribes the enquiry 'Who am I?' from the very start. He had no graded methods. Nor did he grade his disciples according to seniority. Progress was an inner state which only he perceived. The aspirant is expected to understand that he does not know his self, to investigate into it in order to find out what it really is. He must see: "I am possessed of a wrong view of 'I'. I am a slave of a pseudo-I. I should not take him for the real 'I' or lend him that name. This tragedy of wrong thinking has brought on me the sickness of a wrong 'I'. The Maharshi has prescribed the right medicine to cure me. I am under the spell of the ego which has hypnotised and enslaved me. I myself gave it the power to do so by thoughtlessly bestowing my I-sense on it. By doing so I am helping it to rob me of my very Self." Indeed, the Maharshi often referred to the story of King Janaka who, on attaining Realization, exclaimed: "Now I have caught the thief who has been robbing me all these years!"

Why do I thus misplace my I-sense? Because I take sense-perceptions for true. I have to learn to realize the true 'I' which underlies mind and senses and the whole objective world.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 21/18

Man's mind and senses are used to cognize objective things, but this talent is of no use for knowing the Self, in which there is no trace of objectivity. One cannot have a vision of the Self or know the Self as one knows another, because that would imply two selves in you, one to know the other. "You speak of a vision of Siva, but a vision always presumes an object. That implies the existence of a subject. The value of the vision is the same as that of the seer. That is to say the nature of the vision is on the same plane as that of the seer."¹³ "A vision of God is only a vision of the Self objectified as the God of your particular faith.

What you have to do is to know the Self."¹⁴ And to know the Self is only to know, to be aware, to be.

Devotee: When I seek the 'I', I see nothing.

Bhagavan: You say that because you are accustomed to identify yourself with the body and sight with the eyes, but what is there to be seen? And by whom? And how? There is only one Consciousness and this, when it identifies itself with the body, projects itself through the eyes and sees the surrounding objects. The individual is limited to the waking state; he expects to see something different and accepts the authority of his senses. He will not admit that he who sees, the objects seen, and the act of seeing are all manifestations of the same Consciousness - the 'I-I'. Self-enquiry helps to overcome the illusion that the Self is something to see. How do you recognise yourself now? Do you have to hold a mirror up in front of yourself to recognise yourself? The awareness is itself the 'I'. Realize it and that is the truth."¹⁵

However the ego is engrossed with seeing, hearing, feeling and objective knowing. It values

13 *Ibid.*, p. 167/213

14 *Ibid.*, p. 168/215

these functions and considers them as belonging to the Self. Blinded by this view, one does not experience the brilliance of the true 'I'. One's attention is to be drawn away from such objective perceptions to That with respect to which there is unknowingness.¹⁶ If That were known and experienced as It is, It would be recognised as one's very Self, and then the false 'I' would fade out.

The outer man is unreal and should be made passive, a mere recipient of impressions. Self-enquiry helps to do this. The journey is inwards through territory unknown to the senses.

So long as life remains one should strive to reach one's source. This is the only worthy aim in life, the only goal worth seeking, the only use of life that can put an end to suffering and frustration, and reveal the pure Bliss, the radiant Consciousness, the unruffled Being that one really is. The weapon for doing this, on the Maharshi's path, is concentration on the 'I-sense'. This is

15 *Ibid.*, P. 24/22

16 This expression recalls the title of the 14th Century English mystic's guide to aspirants, *The Cloud of Unknowing* (Editor)

not like other thoughts that come and go and can be dismissed at will. One's attention must be constantly drawn to feeling of pure awareness, pure consciousness of 'I-am-ness'. At first this can be done only during concentrated sessions of Self-enquiry known loosely as 'meditation' but later the awareness of 'I-am-ness' becomes an undercurrent underlying all one's activities. This 'I-sense' is the scent, by tracing which to its source, one reaches the Self, as a dog tracks out its master.

Am I worse than a dog? Steadfastly will I
track Thee out and regain Thee,
Oh Arunachala.

(First of the *Five Hymns to Arunachala*, verse 39.)¹⁷

The Maharshi says that if one earnestly seeks the 'I', the false 'I' vanishes, leaving only the true to shine in all its pristine glory. His teaching is based on his own experience not on learning or reasoning, and nothing he says is for the sake of argument. What can be more heartening to the traveller on the Mountain Path?

17. *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, Riders, London and Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai.

When the ego-sense of the individual me vanishes there springs up within me an endless current of 'I-I', conferring unique and transcendental bliss which engulfs all my knowledge and ends in Silence. How then can Silence be expressed?

- TAYUMANAVAR

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It is only because of ignorance that the Self appears to be finite. When ignorance is destroyed the Self which does not admit of any multiplicity whatsoever, truly reveals Itself by Itself, like the sun when the cloud is removed.

- SHANKARA

IS SUFISM ISLAMIC?

By ABDULLAH QUTBUDDIN

When a young Muslim seeks initiation into a Sufi order he will be shown the *silsilah*, that is the 'chain' or genealogical tree of the order, going back from sheikh to sheikh in unbroken line to the Prophet himself. True, many of these orders bear the names of the great Sufi saints of the 11th and 12th centuries of the Christian era - Abdu'l Qadir Jilani, Mulinuddin Chishti, Ibn Arabi and others; but although these great builders impressed their own character on them, they had themselves been initiated into them and were re-adapting them, not creating new ones.

If, however, he then takes a book on Islamic history and culture from the library he will probably read that Sufism is an adaptation of neo-Platonism and came into Islam several centuries after the Prophet. These two apparently contradictory statements may come as a great shock to him. Which is he to believe? The armchair historian, who probably has an anti-spiritual bias in any case, will see no problem; he will simply brush aside the testimony of the *silsilah* as forgery. But one who has felt the intense fervour of the Sufi quest for truth will not believe that it is based on falsehood; nor could he follow it if he did.

Actually the problem melts away as soon as one remembers that Sufism is not a philosophy but a path, which is something very different. A philosopher who studies neo-Platonic and Sufi philosophy does not thereby become a Sufi, is not even training to be a Sufi, does not think of himself as a Sufi, while on the other hand a Sufi *murid* or disciple is not called upon to study neo-Platonic or any other philosophy. He can if he has a bent that way, but there is no obligation. It

is important for him to understand the basic doctrine of *tawhid*, Oneness, which, as interpreted by the Sufis, is the same as Identity or Advaita, but that is all. After that it is practice not theory that is needed.

Even if philosophers had never formulated their theories at all, if there were no texts, no books, no theories, the basic meaning is contained in the *shahada* itself: 'There is no god but God', none worshipful but the One, no being but the Being, no self but the Self. It is the same as that tremendous sentence in the *Bhagavad Gita*: "There is no existence of the unreal and no non-existence of the Real,"¹ and according to Islamic tradition it has been used with full understanding as a weapon for fighting the 'greater holy war' from the beginning. Its implications were developed more specifically later - the burgeoning into voluptuous form of what was latent is a stage in the growth of every religion - philosophers were delighted to find its essential truths elaborated by the Greeks, poets began to write rapturously about it, it became widely known where at first it had eschewed publicity, but all this concerns the *salik* or spiritual wayfarer very little. His task is not to theorise about it but to use it.

From another angle also this question may be asked, whether Sufism is Islamic; for there are groups in the West today which propagate, under the name of Sufism, a sort of vague inter-religious mysticism. To call this Sufism is a simple misuse of language. The term 'Sufism' has always been used, and is therefore correctly used, to indicate '*tasawwuf*', the traditional esoteric aspect of Islam transmitted down the centuries in regular

1. Ch. II, v. 16

schools by direct descent from teacher to disciple. Some of the Sufi saints may have spoken or behaved in a way to shock the orthodox, but a saint often does feel that society is too smug and needs shock treatment. Some of the orthodox, from their side, may have been blind to the esoteric teachings of Islam and denied their orthodoxy, but that too is a phenomenon common to all religions. Plenty of Christians are blind to Christian mysticism, and there have been Hindu dualists who have rejected Advaita and attacked Shankaracharya; but that does not mean that the

via purgativa is not Christian or Vedanta not Hindu or Sufism not Islamic. They may all lead to the same goal, but they are separate paths till they get there.

A new path independent of the religions has indeed been laid down in our age, but it required Bhagavan, that is God Incarnate, to establish it. That does not mean that groups of men can produce a composite path; nor does it justify them in calling what they produce by an Islamic name and then denying that it is Islamic.

If it is said that Liberation is of three kinds, with form or without form or with and without form, then let me tell you that the extinction of the three forms of Liberation is. the only true Liberation.

- *Forty Verses on Reality*, v. 40, from *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, Riders and Sri Ramanasramam.

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Mind is the Buddha, while the cessation of conceptual thought is the Way. Once you stop arousing concepts and thinking in terms of existence and non-existence, long and short, other and self, active and passive, and suchlike, you will find that your mind is intrinsically the Buddha, that, the Buddha is intrinsically Mind, and that Mind resembles a Void.

- From *The Zen Teaching of Huang Po*, p. 67, translated by John Blofeld, Riders.

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Self-Realization does not depend on any kind of consciousness ; its very nature is Awareness or Consciousness.

Shankara, Introduction to *Commentary on Kena Vakya*.

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Tinier than the tiniest atom, Tuka is vast as the sky I swallowed and spat out the body - the very image of worldly delusion. I have abandoned the triplets (of knowledge, knower and known). The light is lit within the lamp. Tuka says : I now remain only for the service of all.

- TUKARAM

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All that has to be done is to disrealize unreality and Reality will remain

- *Ramana Maharshi*

AN AGGRESSIVE TEACHER

By SAGITTARIUS

Christ was an aggressive teacher. Verbally, he hit back hard when attacked. No “gentle Jesus meek and mild” about him. His method was always to counter-attack and put the attacker on the defensive.

When Buddha came to a rest-house with a few followers one night and heard a sadhu there holding forth against him and his teaching he neither intervened nor allowed his followers to. This magnanimity had such an effect that the attacker became a follower. When abused he answered mildly that since he refused to accept the abuse it must fall back on its utterer. When, on the other hand, to take one characteristic example among many, some Pharisees asked Jesus why his disciples ate without the prescribed ritualistic washing of hands, he rounded on them, calling them hypocrites, quoting Isaiah against them and adding: “You are so busy holding on to the traditions of men that you let go the Commandment of God.”¹ True, of course; but certainly the way to make enemies.²

Once when he was accusing some Pharisees of hypocrisy a doctor of law protested: “Master, when you say things like that you are insulting us as well.”

And he returned: “Yes and I do blame you experts in law! For you pile up backbreaking burdens for other men to bear, but you yourselves

will not raise a finger to lift them. Alas for you, for you build memorial tombs for the Prophets - the very men whom your fathers murdered. You show clearly enough how you approve of your father’s actions. They did the actual killing and you put up a memorial to it.”³

Many of the lawyers may have deserved rebuke for being formalists - many lawyers do in all ages; but they could hardly help being antagonised by such an onslaught. Many of the Pharisees may have been hypocrites, but we know from surviving Jewish accounts that some at least of them were men of integrity and devotion sincerely trying to perpetuate all that was best in the Jewish tradition.

Moreover, Christ’s saying that all who were not for him were against him implied that they were deliberately being treated as enemies. To, recognise the new teaching and Teacher must have required such integrity and understanding that there were bound to be quite a number who did not - priests, lawyers, ordinary people - and a wholesale denunciation of them seems unnecessarily aggressive to those steeped in any Eastern tradition. Buddha rejected the Brahmin monopoly of wisdom as firmly as Christ did that of the Pharisees, but he never denounced them; he simply accepted non-Brahmins into his Order on the same footing as Brahmins.

It was not only what Christ taught that was aggressive but the circumstances he chose for teaching it in. Buddha wandered quietly about the country, teaching those who would listen. The Maharshi did not even do that; he stayed at

1. In these articles my quotations from the Gospels will normally be taken from the translation of J. B. Phillips, *The Gospel in Modern English*, Fontana paperback, Collins, as the Authorised Version is so over-familiar and its wording so obscure to the ordinary reader that the sharp edge of the sayings is blunted.

2. St. Mark, ch. VII, v. 6-8

3. St. Luke, ch. XI, v. 46-48

his Ashram at Tiruvannamalai and if any came and asked questions he answered them. But Jesus went and taught in the great Temple of Jerusalem during the most crowded festival of the Jewish year and while doing so mingled his own teaching with violent attacks on the guardians of the Jewish tradition, warning the people not to imitate their way of living⁴ and telling them: “You are like white-washed tombs, which look fine on the outside but inside are full of dead men’s bones and all kinds of rotteness. For you appear like good men on the outside - but inside you are a mass of pretence and wickedness.”⁵ From the social point of view, the priests and lawyers (and they were the guardians of the social order - the more important since political power was in the hands of an alien conqueror) must have regarded much of this as rabblousing and the speaker as a dangerous revolutionary.

Another striking feature is that Jesus constantly demanded belief not only in his teaching but in himself, and denounced those who did not believe in him. “The difference between us is that you come from below and I am from above. You

belong to this world but I do not. That is why I told you, you will die in your sins. For unless you believe that I am Who I am you will die in your sins.”⁶ There is a similar emphasis in Islam; the Quran is full of assertions that Muhammad is a true Prophet and denunciations of those who do not recognise him as such. In both cases the assertion may have been true, the denunciation justified, but apart from the truth of a teaching there is the manner in which it is delivered to be considered. The former might be called ‘vertical’, the descent from Formless Truth to the forms of a human world, the latter ‘horizontal’, the permeation of the human world. Between the two is the impact, the striking of the vertical on the horizontal, and the nature of this can vary. How much more gracious it seems when Buddha says: “Don’t believe because I tell you or anyone else does. Try it out for yourselves and see whether it works, and only believe if you find it brings good results.”

But Christ’s was the aggressive way.

4. St. Matthew. ch. XXIII, v. 3

5. St. Matthew, ch. XXIII, v. 27-28

6. St. John, ch. VIII, v. 23-24

A BEACON STILL

By S. P. MUKHERJI

We have not seen you, Bhagavan;
 We have not approached your lotus-feet,
 Yet do we find
 The now and the then are the same for us,
 The body-presence, the presence in the heart,
 These are the same.
 One thing only do we know-
 That Ramanashram is a beacon still.

The author explains that ‘we’ is used instead of ‘I’ in order to include his wife, who settled down near Sri Ramanasramam with him after the death of the Maharshi. (Editor)

SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS OF THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

By FATHER LAZARUS

The word Orthodoxy¹ comes from two Greek words meaning 'right glory'. So Orthodoxy means right worship, and that implies right belief and right thinking. We are reminded of what our Lord said to the Samaritan woman: "God is spirit, and His worshippers must worship Him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24).

People sometimes say, "It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you live a good life." That is a very unthinking remark. In fact, it isn't true. The truth is that it is of vital importance what we believe, because:

(i) "Without faith it is impossible to please God," still less to be saved (Heb. II: 6)

(ii) "The devils also believe, and tremble," i.e., they are terrified, having neither hope nor love, but believing that what we love and hope for will come true (Jas. 2:19)

(iii) If we do not believe in God we cannot receive His life and power to worship, love and glorify Him. Then, deprived of grace, we fall into idolatry and immorality (Rom. 1:20-32; Wisdom, chs. 13 & 14)

(iv) Our character and conduct depends on what we believe. Character is what we are. Conduct is what we do. What we are and what we do makes up the whole of our life. So our whole life depends on what we believe (Gal. 3:11)

1. The word 'Orthodoxy' is used in this article in a technical sense, as applying to the Greek Orthodox Church, just as members of the Church of Rome use 1 catholic' in a technical sense, as applying to their Church.- (Editor)

An illustration: A mother tells her child that fire hurts, but the child does not believe it. The mother goes away. Left to itself, the child crawls to the fire and puts its hand in. It screams, cries and changes its faith, and consequently changes its conduct.

The Orthodox Church is very rich in dogma, doctrine, dogmatic belief. Where does this revealed truth come from? Orthodox dogma comes from Holy Tradition and Holy Scripture, and is to be found largely in the Church Service books. I suppose the Orthodox Service books are the richest in the world, and these services are based primarily on the twin sources I have just mentioned. In a sense there is only one source, for Holy Scripture is really part of Holy Tradition. It is a form of written tradition. In the life of the Church, and in the life of the individual, tradition comes first. From Adam for many centuries there were no books. Religion was dependent on the traditions handed down from father to son. Even in New Testament times, our Lord wrote nothing. How did the Apostles and early Christians get their faith and knowledge. By tradition, handed on by word of mouth. It was not until 397 AD that the Canon of the New Testament was fixed as we have it today. And in the life of the individual each of us gets his first knowledge of life and religion normally from his parents. Long before we can read we learn from their lives and lips. So the Apostle Paul says: "Hold the traditions which you have been taught by word or letter" (2 Thess. 2:15 ; 1 Cor. II: 2).

Public worship holds a very large place in Orthodox life. The centre of Orthodox worship is the Holy Liturgy, or Holy Eucharist, or Holy

Sacrifice or Lord's Supper, the various names indicating different aspects of the service. Here we are reminded of the nature of the Gospel, of the heart of redemption. For in the Liturgy the whole of Christ's life and Passion is commemorated and re-enacted by word, symbol and action from His humble birth in the stable in Bethlehem to His glorious Resurrection and Ascension, and the sitting at the right hand of the Father. In addition to all the other aspects of the service, the Liturgy is a deep sermon in itself. That is why in the Orthodox Church it is not such a tragedy as it is with other Christians if the priest is a poor preacher or for some reason cannot preach, for the service in itself is a most profound and vivid sermon.

At a meeting of Presbyterian ministers, while discussing the Virgin birth of Christ one minister said, "There are many in this Presbytery who do not believe in that particular fable. I myself am one who does not accept it."

One of them asked, "Then how did you become a Presbyterian minister?"

He replied, "I did accept it when I was much younger. But I have since become educated and no longer hold my previous belief."

One asked, "Do you mind telling us just why you do not believe in the virgin birth?"

He said, "I don't believe in that doctrine because it is only found on two pages of the New Testament. Matthew and Luke are the only ones who ever mention it. In all the writings of Paul he never introduced the question of the virgin birth. Peter never mentions it in his writings, and Jesus was utterly ignorant of any such suggestion. You never find it in a single sentence or statement uttered by Jesus Himself."

"Then tell us," one minister asked, "What do

you teach and preach?" "The Sermon on the Mount," was his instant reply. "That is enough Gospel for anyone."

"Not for me," answered the other minister, "because I don't believe in the Sermon on the Mount!"

If a bomb had been dropped, it could not have created more excitement. Somewhat bewildered, the first minister asked, "What do you mean when you say that you don't believe in the Sermon on the Mount?"

The other replied, "I don't believe that Jesus ever uttered the words that you call the Sermon on the Mount."

Greatly astonished, he said, "Why ever not?"

"Because it only occurs on two pages of the New Testament. Matthew and Luke are the only men who ever mention it. Paul never talked of the Sermon on the Mount. Peter says nothing about it. James, John and Jude are equally ignorant of it. Now, following your line of reason, if Matthew and Luke lied about the Virgin Birth, why should I believe them concerning the Sermon on the Mount?"

Of course, it is not true that St. Paul knew nothing of the Virgin Birth, for he never once calls Jesus "Son of Man" but constantly calls Him the Son of God. And where did Matthew and Luke get the information they give us in the Gospels if not from Jesus and Mary? That, however, is not my subject for the moment. The point I wish to make is this. There are many people in the world today who think that the Sermon on the Mount is the essence and heart of the Gospel. "Give us more of the Sermon on the Mount and less theology," they say. Even such a great man as Mahatma Gandhi said: "The message of Jesus is contained in the Sermon on

the Mount, unadulterated and taken as a whole.” It is one of the popular heresies and it needs to be answered.

The Sermon on the Mount is not the Gospel that the early Church taught. When St. Paul wanted to recall the Corinthians to the fundamentals of Christianity, he did not say: “Blessed are the peacemakers. Do not resist an evil person. Love your enemies. Let tomorrow take care of itself. Do to others what you would like them to do to you. Be perfect.” Those are magnificent principles. They could be called good advice. They could not possibly be called good news. No, St. Paul wrote something quite different. Here are his words: “I delivered to you among the fundamentals what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve, then to more than 500 brothers at once, then to James, then to all the Apostles. Last of all He appeared to me” (1 Cor. 15:1-9).

And here is what St. Peter preached

The God of our fathers raised Jesus Whom you killed by hanging Him on a tree. It is this Jesus Whom God has exalted at His right hand to be our Leader and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit Whom God has given to those who obey Him” (Acts 5: 30-32).

In any case the original Gospel was not a sermon, and not just the Beatitudes. It was thrilling news, glad tidings of great joy for all the peoples of the world. It was Jesus Himself, the divine Saviour, His life, His death, His Cross, His Empty Tomb, His Kingdom, His love and forgiveness, His power and His glory. It is this great truth that our salvation depends on, the act

of God, on what God in His great love has done for us, that Orthodox Spirituality insists upon and emphasises in a remarkable way. In order to fix in the minds and hearts of the faithful what God has done for us, the Orthodox church, besides the Creed, has twelve great annual Feasts commemorating events in the drama of Redemption.

You may be surprised to learn that Easter is not one of the twelve. So great is the Resurrection in the mind of the Church that it is in a class by itself and is called “The Feast of Feasts and Triumph of Triumphs.” Easter is always celebrated at midnight and the service usually takes till about dawn. To attend an Orthodox Easter Service is an unforgettable experience. Many people, including Roman Catholic priests and monks, have told me that they have never seen any service to compare with it. The singing, especially as performed in the Russian Church, is uplifting in the extreme. One detail: at certain points in the service the priest greets the people in a loud voice with the words, “Christ is Risen,” and the congregation responds, “He is Risen indeed!” This is also how people greet one another at Easter time. Instead of saying Good Day or Namaskaram, one says “Christ is Risen” and the response is “He is Risen Indeed.” On Sundays and at Easter there is a rule that prostrations to the ground are not to be made, as the joy of the Resurrection overwhelms even the sense of penitence. Also at Easter the psalms are not used for a whole week, and there is no fasting.

No days are blank in the Orthodox calendar. Every day some saints are remembered. Saints are of various classes. The Greek word Martyr means a witness. The martyrs bore witness to Christ with their blood. It is possible to be a martyr in various ways. “Feel the tortures of conscience,” says St. Athanasius, “die to sin, amputate sinful desires, and you will be martyr

in will. The martyrs struggled with the torturers, kings and princes. You have a torturer, the devil; he is the king of sin. There are also prince-persecutors, namely demons. If you refrain from these passions and from sinful desires, it will mean that you have trampled on the idols and become a martyr.” So much for St. Athanasius.

Typical of Orthodoxy is the group of saints called ‘Fools for Christ’s sake’. These were men and women who, for the love of God and in response to a special call, pretended to be mad or mentally abnormal. I think the earliest was a nun of Tabenna in the Egyptian desert, St. Isidora (380). She was never known to eat proper food. She lived on the scraps the nuns left. It was a large community and she was mostly treated with disdain and abhorrence. But such was her humility that she never refused to serve and obey everyone in the lowliest tasks.

Another Fool was St. Basil of Moscow who died in 1552, aged 88. One of the most magnificent churches in the world was built in his honour and can be seen in Moscow today. Once the Russian Emperor was building a new palace on Sparrow Mountains. One day he went to church, but instead of praying he was thinking about beautifying the new palace. St. Basil went to the same church and stood in a corner unnoticed. But he saw what the Emperor was doing with his mind. After the Liturgy the Emperor went home and Basil followed him. The Emperor asked him, “Where have you been?” “There, where you were, at the Holy Liturgy.” “How was that? I didn’t see you.” “But I saw you and I saw where you really were.” “I was nowhere else, only in church,” said the Emperor. “Your words are not true, O Emperor, for I saw you in spirit on Sparrow Mountains building your palace.” Deeply moved, the Emperor said: “It is true, that is just what happened to me.” That is typical of the spiritual

insight to which the saints attained.

Here it may be good to mention that monasticism has always been highly regarded in the Orthodox Church. It is based on Christ’s words: “He who is able to receive it, let him receive it” (Mat. 19: 10-12). And “sell what you have and give to the poor, and come and follow Me” (Mat. 19:21). And the promises to those who renounce everything (Mat. 19:29). Monks are pledged to battle with evil. Monasticism is not an escape from service.

A great virtue in Orthodox Spirituality is dispassion (Gk. *Apatheia*), which is often misunderstood and mistranslated as “apathy”, “indifference,” or “insensibility” in a stoic sense. But true dispassion is freedom from passion through being filled with the spirit of God as a fruit of divine love. It is a state of soul in which a burning love for God and men leaves no room for selfish and human passions. How far it is from the cold stoic conception, we can see from the fact that St. Diadochus can speak of “the fire of dispassion.”¹

The thought of deification may seem strange,² yet that is a word constantly met with in Orthodox works. It is based on Holy Scripture, of course. St. Peter tells us that God has given us His “great and precious promises that through them we may be partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1: 4). And St. Athanasius explains that it is through the Incarnation that “the flesh has been deified.” This deification is worked out, according to St. Maximus the Confessor, by the identification of our human will with the divine will. That prevents all pantheism. It is union with the divine life and activity, not with the divine being and essence. Iron placed in a fire becomes

1. It corresponds to the Hindu ‘*vairagya*’ and could perhaps best be rendered as ‘non-attachment’ or ‘equal-mindedness’. (Editor).

2. It will not seem strange to Hindu readers. (Editor).



red hot and fiery, but it remains iron.

Everyone is hungry for life and happiness. That is just what Jesus Christ came to give. "I have come," He said, "that you may have life and may have it abundantly." There is nothing wrong in being hungry for life and happiness, because that is the way we are made. Yet it is one of life's paradoxes that the pursuit of happiness, like the pursuit of pleasure, defeats its own purpose. We find happiness only when we do not directly seek it. So God gave us the spiritual law: "Seek first the Kingdom of God" (Lk. 12:31). Then He promises that all our needs will be supplied. So Orthodox Christians have seasons of special seeking by penitence, prayer and abstinence that they may partake more fully of that life and happiness which constitutes the Kingdom of God. People think that wealth and honours mean happiness. But God tells us that a man's life and happiness does not consist in the abundance of his possessions (Lk. 12:15). In the Orthodox view, so great is the human heart that nothing less than God can satisfy it. And the truth is that God is man's happiness. So all men are really seeking God. But it is one thing to try to get happiness for yourself, and quite another to try to establish God's Kingdom of divine power and happiness in the hearts of all men everywhere.

When Our Lord began His public life, the gist of His message was: "The Kingdom Of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the Gospel" (Mark. 1: 15). To repent means, according to the Greek, to change our mind, our outlook, and consequently our life. Instead of thinking thoughts of fear, revenge, anxiety, depression, acquisitiveness and sickness, it means to live and think in terms of the heavenly kingdom which is all around us, and in which we live and move and have our being. Man is a spirit, housed in a body. So he lives at once in Time and Eternity. Eternal life begins here and now. Our business

or church is heaven on earth. The ikons or pictures remind us of things not of this world. "Our life, our home is in Heaven" (Philip 3:20). We are surrounded by Saints and Angels and all the heavenly inhabitants. A prayer that occurs daily in Lent reads: "Standing in the temple of Thy glory, we think that we are standing in Heaven." "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you" (Lk. 17: 21), so unless you take Heaven with you in your heart, you will never go there.

God made the world of Time as a school for Eternity. During this brief spell on earth, we are meant to be schooling ourselves to live with God Our Father in perfect joy forever. But many people find this world so beautiful, so attractive, that they get attached to it and even do not want to leave it. So St. John says: "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. For the world passes away and the desire for it; but he, who does the will of God lives for ever." (1 John 2:15).

We are meant to find God in His creation, to pass through the visible to the invisible, to "look at the rainbow and praise Him Who made it" (Eccles. 43:12). In order to be attached to our Creator we must be detached from creatures. Detachment is a virtue which holds a high place in Orthodox thought. "A small hair disturbs the eye, and a small care prevents detachment," says St. John of the Ladder. To love creatures instead of the Creator is idolatry.

A remarkable feature in the Orthodox Church is what may be called her sacramentalism. In order to train her children and teach them to pass through the visible to the Invisible, she uses pictures, crosses, various symbols and sacraments. The Orthodox Church calls sacraments mysteries. A mystery is not something of which you can understand nothing, something which is all darkness; it is more like a circle of light surrounded by darkness.



The Holy Mysteries or Sacraments are neither the end nor the essence of the spiritual life. They are means of grace, and only means. But these means have a great importance in the life of the Church. Because God has clothed our spirits in material bodies, He binds Himself to use material things in communicating with us. And so His law and practice in nature and grace is to give us His Gifts through the hands of His creatures. In other words God works through agents. So our life comes through a human father and mother, light through the sun, breath through the air, food through the earth. It is the same with spiritual things. The science of the Sacraments is through the material to the spiritual, through the visible to the Invisible. They teach us to find God through His creatures, to find Life through matter. The wonderful works of creation all tell us of the divine Presence, Power, Beauty, and Love.

As man is soul and body, so Orthodox worship requires the homage of both, an Old Testament

ideal, of course: "That you may worship the Lord our God by everything that you do" (Josh. 4:24). Says St. Isaac the Syrian: "Every prayer in which the body does not participate and by which the heart is not affected is to be reckoned as an abortion without a soul." So in Orthodox worship we bow with our will and with our body as well, that is we make prostrations to the ground. Another feature is the sign of the cross. Just as the Name of Jesus is made by a movement of the tongue, so the sign of the cross is made by a movement of hand and arm. The cross is the sign of faith, hope and love; it is the Christian sign, which God wants us never to forget so He puts it everywhere. Every tree, every telegraph pole is a cross. What a book is to a literate person, a picture is to an illiterate. It brings him understanding.

And we believe in the Communion of the Saints, because there is now no death and all are alive to God. We ask the Saints to pray for us, and we pray for those who are not yet saints.

Your true nature is something never lost to you even in moments of delusion, nor is it gained at the moment of Enlightenment. In it is neither delusion nor right understanding. It fills the Void everywhere and is intrinsically of the substance of the One Mind.

- From *The Zen Teaching of Huang Po*, p. 93,
translated by John Blofeld, Rider.

I gave birth to myself! I was conceived within my own body. Now all vows are fulfilled; all desire is extinguished. I have become well and strong. I died away that time. I look on both sides. Tuka is what he is.

- TUKARAM.

The purpose of Atma Jnana (spiritual knowledge) is to remove the illusory self created by Avidya (ignorance). The attainment of Self by Divine Knowledge means only the removal of the illusory, self created by ignorance through the superimposition of the body as the self.

- Shankara, *Commentary on the Taittiriya Upanishad*.

A VISIT TO ANANDASHRAM IN THE LIFETIME OF SWAMI RAMDAS

By UNNAMULAI

Some friends were going to Anandashram by car and, having heard of Swami Ramdas for years past but never yet visited him, I accepted their invitation to accompany them. In fact, he was the only living saint whom I had an inclination to see. As it turned out, it was very fortunate that I took this opportunity because only a few months later he died suddenly, quite unexpectedly.

While the car was approaching Anandashram after a long drive through undulating wooded country and was still about two miles away I suddenly had the extraordinary experience of hearing the invocation of Ram everywhere: the earth, the trees, the humming of the car, the sound of the wind, all were vibrating with the Name of Ram. This was all the more remarkable as I had never been drawn to this invocation and had never used it. Later I understood why it was so.

The first thing that struck me on beholding Swami Ramdas, affectionately called 'Papa' by everyone, was how much nicer he looked in real life than on photos. His face was beaming with joyfulness, goodness, liveliness; his smile was so childlike and spontaneous that one felt immediately drawn to him.

I found that the Ashram was being run by Mother Krishna Bai, known to everybody as 'Mataji'. When we went from the car straight to the Swami's room, tired and unwashed, she was there. I had met her once before briefly, years ago, when she was passing through Madras. She was young then and in good health, but somehow the meeting had left no impression, but now I saw before me a face ravished by sickness yet

incredibly beautiful, with a beauty not of this world. She is worshipped as a realized soul.

We were received very kindly and shown to our rooms, which were comfortable and airy. After washing and changing into a white sari I went back to Papa's room. A number of people were there, sitting on the floor, ladies against the wall and men at the other side, with Papa in his armchair, his feet resting on a footstool. People kept coming and prostrating before him and touching his feet. He explained that a current of power flows through a saint and that there is especial benefit from touching his feet. That is why so many of the sacred poems and songs refer to the lotus feet of the Guru. In his presence one felt enveloped in an atmosphere of love and joyfulness.

At half past seven the bell rang for the evening meal and we all went to an adjoining building in which were the dining hall and kitchen. Food was served on stainless steel plates on the floor, in two rows, one for women and one for men. While we waited to be served the dining hall was resounding with the chanting of Ram Nam. Outstanding was the soprano of a Norwegian trained opera singer, and the powerful deep voice of a German. The food was purely vegetarian, excellent in quality and with due consideration for those who could not eat spiced food. One could feel the loving care of Mataji behind it.

After the meal we assembled in the main hall where Papa was already seated. People asked questions and he not only gave replies and upadesa but launched into reminiscences of his

1. A sample of these talks is contained in his book, *God-Experience*, reviewed in this issue.

own sadhana during the years when he was a wandering sadhu.¹

Although most of these can be found in his books, it was quite a different experience to hear him telling them, sometimes poignant, sometimes full of laughter.

At 10 o'clock all took leave of Papa and Mataji and went to their rooms, except a few who just spread their bedding and lay down to sleep in the hall.

At 5 in the morning some of the devotees went to Papa's room and sat in silent meditation for about an hour, until 6, when he got up. This morning hour seems to have been the only time for silent meditation. During the day it was more talking and asking questions. The chanting of the mantra went on almost uninterruptedly in the big hall, except when Papa sat there with the devotees, as he usually did after lunch and dinner. As I said, the atmosphere was very lively when he began his expositions mingled with reminiscences. Once I was deeply moved when he told about his experience as a sadhu at a railway station, how cold it was, and a policeman came and told him to get up and go somewhere else, but at first he couldn't because his legs were numb and swollen from sitting in the cold. With a voice choked with emotion, I asked, "And then?". He immediately saw what I felt and said reassuringly. "It was all right afterwards. Ram took good care of Ramdas and some friends looked after him." He always did refer to himself in this way, in the third person, as 'Ramdas' (meaning 'slave of Ram').

There was the spontaneity of a child in him, a carefree, happy child. When the mail came in the afternoon he would read the letters out with childlike zest, even if they were private. It was *bhakti* at its purest, though at the same time he

sometimes spoke pure Advaita. Of course, ultimately *bhakti* and *jnana* merge; there can not be love without wisdom or wisdom without love.

When Papa laughed (which was very often) it used to bring on prolonged bouts of coughing ending in breathlessness. I was very concerned about this and had a strong foreboding. This proved only too justified a few months later when he suddenly expired in a fit of suffocation, as we were told by an eye-witness. How the devotees must have missed him! However, Mataji is still there. While I was there she was running the Ashram firmly but unobtrusively and with loving care. What struck me was her great modesty and genuine spirit of loving service, which she managed to instil into those around her. Ill as she was, one would see her folding the laundry of the visitors and doing endless jobs, big and small.

Finally something about Ram Nam, which was the very essence of the teaching of Ramdas. People were singing it, repeating it silently, writing it out, for hours together. Its purpose is to hold the mind to one thought so as to prevent it wandering. Mantras are not my way, but Papa explained that, even following some other way, the *mantra* can be used as a fan to make the flame burn brighter.

A strange thing happened in this connection. It must have been about the time that Swami Ramdas expired (about which we heard only several days later). I was making the pilgrimage round Arunachala. My mind was unsteady, so I remembered the *mantra* and what Papa had said about it and used it as a fan. At that moment it came to life for me. It was Papa himself merged in the *mantra*. There was that indescribable feeling of tenderness, nearness, all his goodness; he was there, all-pervading. Papa lives on in the *mantra*.

THE RELATIONS BETWEEN RELIGION AND ART

By ARTHUR OSBORNE

Despite the secular spirit which swept over Europe at the Renaissance and has spread to the rest of the world in the present century, it would still be true to say that the greater part of the world's art and poetry has been religious in inspiration and origin. Why?

It has been suggested that the reason is simply that in past ages the churches have been the principal or only patrons; that, however, is a shallow explanation, looking at the past through modern spectacles. It does not explain why Hindu life and literature were dominated for centuries by the great religious epics (and let us remember that the Greeks also considered the Homeric poems the basis of their religion, although they show little of the profundity of the Hindu epics). It does not fit the Taoist painters, who were largely amateurs in no need of a patron, or the sculptors and painters of Buddhist cave temples, at Ajanta and elsewhere, who were world-renouncers. It would be laughed at by the Persian poet-saints who scandalised the orthodox. It does not even apply to the great temples of Mediaeval India or the gothic cathedrals of Christendom, in complying with whose intricate symbolism and shaping whose exquisite figures the builders were hammering out the lineaments of their own true nature.

Nor were lay patrons lacking princes and feudal lords, not to mention royal courts, in India, in China, in Japan, in Christendom, in most parts of the world. Works of art were indeed created for them too and poems sung in their honour. To take but one example among many, there are the exquisite miniature-like paintings of Rajputana. But always the greatest output, greatest both in quality and quantity, was for religion. And indeed, how many of the Rajput paintings had the eternal symbolism of the love of Radha and Krishna for their theme!

Before attempting an answer, there is another question that interweaves with this. What is the attitude of religion to art? At their origin religions seem to agree in either ignoring or deprecating art. The Quran forbids representational art and speaks scornfully of poets. The Tao-Te-King declares that the five senses dull the mind and that the Sage, therefore, is not deluded by them but aims at what is of benefit. Both Christ and Buddha completely ignore art and poetry in their teaching, as do also their immediate followers. In fact all religions that have a known historical origin run the same course: from an austere, bare primitivism when art is deprecated or ignored to a gorgeous mediaevalism a few centuries later, when religion burgeons out into a luxurious glow of beauty, even though man's private life is still hard compared with the comforts and conveniences of our secular world.

Once again, the obvious answer - that the religions became untrue to their origins - is superficial and does not fit the case. The foremost purpose of a religion is to guide those who will adventure out of the apparent reality of this life to the clear-sighted bliss or ecstatic rapture of the Sage or Saint, through whom waves of Grace flow downwards and outwards to the less aspiring believers. So long as this continues to be done a religion is well rooted in its origins; so long as a tree bears good fruit it is a healthy tree. Religions which could produce a St. Francis and an Eckhart, an Abdul Qadir and an Ibn Arabi, a Shankara and a Ramanuja, an Ashvaghosha and a Hui Neng, were not untrue to their origins; the paths were still open and guides who had trodden them still available. Moreover, it was often the Masters themselves who created or encouraged art or poetry, a Dante and a Rumi, a Kabir and a Milarepa.

There is another explanation. In the incandescent white heat of the origin of a religion the energy of those who aspire, strengthened as by a springboard by their rejection of the degenerate world around them, shoots straight upwards. The *sattva guna*, the upward tendency, dominates. Directing the energy outwards to forms, even beautiful forms, would be a weakness, almost a betrayal, for however beautiful forms may be they limit and obscure the pure beauty of the formless. As a poet saw intuitively long after the certainty of religion had been lost, even though life be a dome of many-coloured glass, it still “Stains the white radiance of eternity.”

If you are climbing a mountain path and it is a matter of life and death to reach the summit, if all your alertness is needed to avoid pitfalls and dangers, all your strength to strive upwards, you do not stop to pick flowers by the wayside, however beautiful they may be. One who has reached safety can do that. Even after art and poetry began to be honoured, it was usually assumed in India (and to a large extent in Buddhism and Islam also) that it is those who have attained Realization who should write poems. Indeed, their greatest poets are those, like Tukaram in Marathi or Tayumanavar in Tamil, who wrote from the fullness of spiritual knowledge. The Maharshi himself, although he did not write much, composed in the ‘Forty Verses’ one of the most profound metaphysical statements and in the first of the ‘Five Hymns to Sri Arunachala’ one of the most glowing symbolical love poems of all religions and all ages.¹

To some extent this is anticipating. Coming now to the mediaeval epoch, we find that the incandescent white heat has cooled to a mellow golden glow. *Sattva* is combined now with *rajas*, the upward-tending with the outward-tending urge. Indirect paths to Realization begin to be

followed: Tantrism in Hindu and Buddhist India, Hermetism in Christendom and indeed, with surprising similarity, in China and Islam also. It is found necessary first to harmonise a man, redirecting his lower tendencies and developing his finer qualities, before launching him on the final quest. Such rectification no longer happens automatically, as a by-product of the quest, as in the earlier stage, but needs to be planned and organised. Art is now deliberately encouraged and developed, it is not merely allowed as a concession to those who are not one-pointed enough to strive without it, still less is it indulged in as a luxury; it is used as a technique of discipline and development. A poem acquires the qualities of a *mantra*, a sacred incantation whose vibrations harmonise the mind; a drawing or architectural plan becomes a development of a yantra or a mandala, a shape of inherent power.²

In mediaeval religious art, whether poetry or the plastic arts, whether in Japan or Europe or anywhere between, gorgeous exuberance is combined with strict discipline of form and precise symbolism. The adaptation of art to symbolism in order to use it as a mode of worship or a technique of training does not in any way impair its value as art. Rather it enhances it, for art is form-giving and, even though one had the expertise of a Swinburne, the form-giving will remain trivial if there is nothing great to give form to. Therefore what might be termed in a broad generic sense ‘mediaeval’ religious art is on the one hand rigorously formal and on the other superbly sumptuous.

Exact form does not destroy freedom in art; it gives it wings. Poetry being formal and disciplined language as compared with prose, which is comparatively informal and undisciplined, there is no sense in making it formless; if it is not going to conform to the rules of poetry let it be prose. So-called ‘free’ or formless poetry is in

1. See *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, Riders, London, and Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai.

2. See *The Theory and Practice of the Mandala* by Prof. Giuseppe Tucci, Riders, London.

fact half baked poetry. Either the impulse behind it had not a high enough temperature to melt the words and make them flow into its mould, or the creative power flagged when the work was half done - that is when the idea was half-baked into a poem.

I know this from experience and I consider it important enough to justify an autobiographical aside. As a young man I aspired to be a poet - in fact I believed I was one. However, nothing came of it. Then came the time when neither prose nor verse had any value except as a vehicle for spiritual wisdom and a signpost on the way (which, indeed, is what poetry should be). Then, quite suddenly, poems began to come almost ready-made.

SARAH

See how Grace is fallen on me!
The sudden beauty of my rhymes
A sign made plain for all to see;
As the Lord wrought in ancient times
With that gaunt patriarch's aged wife,
Sarah, who through all her life
Had been a barren tree.

Had this power come in youthful years,
A bastard brood my rhymes had been.
Begotten of desires and fears,
Or pompous words that little mean.
That shameful wandering denied,
I stayed perforce a faithful bride,
Whose bridegroom now appears.

To turn my rhymes to worldly things
Now would be a bitter shame,
Like a worthless wife who brings
Disgrace upon her husband's name.
There is not even the desire;
No lesser theme can him inspire
Who of the highest sings.

The first four poems were almost formless (actually, one was a lyric though with only vaguely

formed verses and one in blank verse, though I did not realize this at the time); it had not yet occurred to me that I was professional enough to attempt rhyme and metre. Then a poem came which, in intricacy and regularity of metre, was more like 17th than 20th Century verse, and I discovered that if the impulse is sufficient the words will flow to the pattern. If not, better keep quiet. This was the poem

CONSOLATION

Disconsolate, to Him in grief I cried,
And the Beloved
From my own heart replied.
No radiant form appeared;
The subtle mist that cleared
Nought new discovered,
No splendid bridegroom, no expectant bride.

All pageants pass; whatever comes must go.
Death hath a place
For all the mind can know.
Even the loftiest vision
Time holdeth in derision
Divine embrace
From vibrant joy to memory must grow.

He shed the jewelled robe for my delight,
And I beheld
A Void, no sound, no sight.
Only What IS shall be
Him-Me-Eternity,
All clouds dispelled,
Seer and seen grown one in radiant sight.

According to Hindu doctrine there are three *gunas*: *sattva*, the upward tendency whose colour is white, *rajas*, the outward, whose colour is red, and *tamas*, the downward, whose colour is black. All things are held in being by their combined stress. After the epoch of *rajas* in the relations between religion and art comes that of *tamas*. That is when art has broken away from

religion and sunk to utilitarian and ornamental patterns, worldly and human themes. Occasional flashes of intuition may still inspire the poet, but no steady glow of knowledge, no true understanding. Religion is again devoid of art and poetry, but below it now, not above it. Bad poetry wedded to bad music forms hymns that can have only a sentimental value. Holy pictures that cannot be dignified with the name of art are used to foster emotion. Except for rebels against the epoch, people no longer aspire. The paths are overgrown with weeds and blocked by rockfalls and there are no guides. The cycle comes round to where it started but in an inverted likeness. In the pure aspiration of the beginning men had no time for intricate techniques and paths; now again they have no time, but now because they have no aspiration at all.

Krishna says in the *Bhagavad Gita*:

“Whenever harmony (*dharma*) is obscured and disharmony (*adharma*) triumphs, I appear” (Ch. IV, v. 7). Now, in this modern age, when circumstances make the elaborate disciplines of an indirect path once more unsuitable, if not

impossible, God has appeared on earth incarnate as Ramana Maharshi and opened once more a direct path which, by his Grace, is accessible to those who turn to him and on which art and poetry, yantra and *mantra*, are again unnecessary. He did not encourage those who trod the direct path under his guidance to divert their energies to poetry or any of the arts. “All this is only activity of the mind. The more you exercise the mind and the more success you have in composing verses, the less peace you have. And what use is it to acquire such accomplishments if you don’t acquire peace. But if you tell such people this it doesn’t appeal to them; they can’t keep quiet. They must be composing songs.”

It is significant that when someone asked him about a technique for developing the various virtues, and combating the vices in oneself he replied that such techniques may be useful on an indirect path but on the direct path of Self-enquiry all this happens automatically. The two go together: encouragement of art and indirect methods of training. Conditions in the world today are suitable for neither.

Although the scriptures proclaim ‘Thou art That’, it is only a sign of weakness of mind to meditate ‘I am That, not this’, because you are eternally That. What has to be done is to investigate what one really is and remain That.

- *Forty Verses on Reality*, v. 32, from *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, Rider and Sri Ramanasramam.

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The Vedantic texts teach that although Brahman is One he is regarded both as possessing attributes and as free from them. In the former sense He is the object of meditation, in the latter of Knowledge.

- Shankara, *Commentary on the Brahma Sutra*, 1-1-12.

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My death is dead-and gone! I have been made immortal. All sense of body is wiped out root and branch. The deluge came and went. I clung to life with courage. Tuka says: The foundations have been truly disclosed.

- Tukaram.

“I AM NOT, BUT THE UNIVERSE IS MY SELF”

(Shit-t'ou, 700-790)

LOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THIS INTUITION

By WEI WU WEI

Objects are only known as the result of reactions of the senses of sentient beings to a variety of stimuli.

These stimuli appear to derive from sources external to the reagent apparatus, but there is no evidence of this apart from the reagent apparatus itself.

Objects, therefore, are only a surmise, for they have no demonstrable existence apart from the subject that cognises them.

Since that subject itself is not sensorially cognisable except as an object, subject also is only a surmise.

Since the factual existence of neither subject nor object can be demonstrated, existence is no more than a conceptual assumption, which, metaphysically, is unacceptable.

There is, therefore, no valid evidence for the existence of a world external to the consciousness of sentient beings, which external world is therefore seen to be nothing but the cognisers of it, that is - sentient beings themselves.

But there can be no factual evidence for the existence of sentient beings, either as subject or as object, who therefore are merely a conceptual assumption on the part of the consciousness in which they are cognised.

It follows that 'consciousness' also can only be a conceptual assumption without demonstrable existence.

What, then, can this assumption of consciousness denote? This question can only be answered in metaphysical terms, according to which consciousness may be regarded as the manifested aspect of the unmanifested or non-manifestation, which is the nearest it seems possible to go towards expressing in a concept that which by definition is inconceivable.

Why should this be so? It must be so because

conceptuality cannot have conceptuality for source, but only the non-conceptual, because that which objectively conceives must necessarily spring from the objectively non-existent, the manifested from non-manifestation, for conceptuality cannot conceive or objectify itself - as an eye cannot see itself as an object.

Therefore consciousness can be described as pure non-conceptuality, which is 'pure' because unstained either by the conceptual or the non-conceptual, which implies that there is a total absence of both positive and negative conceptuality.

Not existing as an object, even conceptual, there can be no 'it', there is no 'thing' to bear a name, no subject is possible where no object is, and total absence of being is inevitably implied.

All we can say about this which we are, which to us must be objectified as 'it' in order that we may speak of it at all, is to regard 'it' as the noumenon of phenomena, but, since neither of these exists objectively, phenomenally regarded it may be understood as the ultimate absence from which all presence comes to appear.

But consciousness, or 'Mind', does not project the phenomenal universe: 'it' *IS* the phenomenal universe which is manifested as its self.

Metaphysics, relying on intuition or direct perception, says no more than this, and points out that no word, be it the Absolute, the Logos, God, or Tao, can be other than a concept which, as such, has no factual validity whatsoever.

This-Which-Is, then, which cannot be subject or object, which cannot be named or thought, and the realization of which is the ultimate awakening, can only be indicated in such a phrase as that quoted above:

"I am not, but the apparent universe is my Self."

BUCHMAN AND BHAGAVAN

By BUCHMANITE

How can there be anything in common between Frank Buchman, who has been referred to disparagingly as a 'mere moralist' and Ramana Maharshi, the Master of divine philosophy? I think there is, and I am glad of this opportunity to air my views on the subject.

Why did Frank Buchman launch Moral Rearmament? Because, as he put it, the fences were down and someone had to repair them. In former times only too many people broke through the moral fences and trespassed into fields where they had no right to be; but at least they knew they were trespassing. They knew that they had left the highroad and broken through a moral fence and had no right to be where they were. But now young people grow up recognising no fences, or considering that it is the fences that have no right to be where they are. Formerly if people went back on their word they knew it was wrong to do so; now, who cares? If they fornicated they knew that their religion forbade it; now religion does not come into the question and they can quote psychologists [who say] that it is the natural thing to do. If hatred and envy poison the air anyone who speaks against them is likely to be sneered at as a goody-goody. Above all, religion no longer means anything for the vast majority of people in Western countries. And the ease with which Communism supplanted it in China suggests that its roots may be withered in Eastern countries too, even though on the surface it still seems to flourish.

Frank Buchman steadfastly refused to found a new religion or sect. He held that there were too many religions and sects in the world already. A new one would soon grow a stiff epidermis, like all the others, and shut its followers off from theirs, whereas what he wanted was to build

bridges between men of good will in all religions. Himself, he was a devout Christian, but that did not mean that he wanted to make Indians and Japanese, Buddhists and Muslims Christians. He wanted them to become good men, sincere men, men one could trust - with one's money, with one's secrets, with one's daughter, men of good will, eager to help where help was needed, not bearing malice or spreading slander, not gloating over another's misfortune or resenting past injuries. In many, if not most cases, the best instrument for recalling a man to a life of right conduct is the religion he knew in childhood and still sees around him; therefore Moral Rearmament can generally achieve better results by strengthening a man in his own religion than by coaxing him to another. Its reluctance to proselytise does not mean that it is indifferent to religion; on the contrary, it values religious faith above all, but it sees that in the present urgent work of rebuilding the dykes and holding back the flood, all religions can help. After all, however great the differences between them, all religions do forbid falsehood and violent pursuit of one's own interests, hatred, envy and self-indulgence, and do sponsor a way of life that could be called moral, and that Moral Rearmament could approve of.

One of the criticisms levelled at MRA is that it is not intellectual, it has no philosophy. That is the whole paradox. It is the inevitable result of its refusal to become a sect or a religion. As soon as it draws up any philosophy or code of beliefs for itself, however broad and general, it becomes a creed and is walled off from other creeds, whereas its purpose is to build bridges not walls.

I very much doubt whether Guru Nanak, the

founder of Sikhism, ever intended to found a religion. The Granth Sahib, the holy book containing his songs, contains also a number that he selected from earlier poet-saints, some Hindu and others Muslim, and especially from Kabir, the great mystic who had both Hindu and Muslim disciples and refused to belong to either. What Nanak wanted was not to build a new enclosure between that of the Hindus and that of the Muslims, but to make a bridge between those two, showing that in essentials they agreed and that the accidentals were not worth fighting about. He sang

The Lord is the Truth Absolute,
True is His Name.
His language is love infinite
His creatures ever cry to Him
'Give us more, O Lord, give more'
The Bounteous One gives unwearyingly.

What then should we offer
That we might see His Kingdom?
With what language
Might we His love attain?

In the ambrosial hours of fragrant dawn
Think upon and glorify His Name and greatness.
Our own past actions
Have put this garment on us,
But salvation comes only through His Grace.

O Nanak, this alone need we know,
That God, being Truth, is the one Light of all.¹

There could hardly be a broader and more non-committal creed than that - that God is Truth and Love and bestows His Grace on us for our salvation; and yet Sikhism hardened into a religion. This serves to illustrate how careful MRA has to be to avoid doing so too. It has to

deny itself a philosophy and a creed, because they would immediately shut out all those who follow any different philosophy or creed. Therefore MRA has to be unintellectual - but that does not mean that those who follow and propagate it are necessarily unintellectual. What is required of them is that they should be men of good will and initiative, intelligent enough to see that today's situation is perilous and dedicated enough to work at mending the dykes before the flood sweeps in. If they are intellectual as well, so much the better, but it is good will and initiative that come first.

In restoring moral barriers philosophy is not very important. Religion is much more potent. Then why not leave it to religion? Simply because the religions today have become too enfeebled to do it. If they recovered sufficient vitality to leaven the lump and uphold a moral code not only among a few scattered adherents but in the community as a whole, thus making MRA unnecessary, that would be the sign that MRA had succeeded.

But ethical control, it may be said, is only one aspect of religion, and perhaps not the highest. Granted, but it is one, and it is not being done, or not at all adequately.

It could be said that religion has two functions or aspects, one horizontal and the other vertical. The word is said to derive from a Latin root meaning 'to bind'. Horizontally it binds men together in a way of living where each has his rights and duties, his functions and obligations - not only his rights, as so many modern idealists seem to suppose. Rights entail obligations. As one witty philosopher is said to have put it, your right of movement ends where my nose begins.

A fully living and flourishing religion - for instance Christianity before the Reformation (and before the corruption that called for the

1. No. 4 of the hymns of Nanak in *Selections from the Sacred Writings of the Sikhs*, Allen and Unwin, UNESCO collection of representative works.

Reformation) - binds the whole of society together in a living harmony. It also organises each person's life in a pattern or harmony. A man grows up with the knowledge [of] what he can do and what he must not do. The pattern may not be perfect, there may be dark smudges in it, social injustices, but by and large it will be found that sins and uncharitable actions are listed among what a man must not do. There may be situations where he can do them and get away with it - every human pattern is stained by imperfections and I am far from wanting to idealise the past - but in general he is liable to the censure of his religion, and to a large extent this is effective, often bringing with it social ostracism or legal condemnation. But today there is no valid condemnation; the fences are down. Who cares?

The vertical aspect of religion is its binding men to God or, perhaps better, providing a lifeline by which a man can climb up to God. Horizontally a religion produces a harmonious way of life; vertically it produces saints. And the two dimensions constantly interweave, since the harmonious way of life facilitates a man's growth to sanctity, while the saints, by the radiation of their influence, harmonise the life of a community.

Sainthood doesn't just happen. A saint is no more a lucky freak than is a concert pianist or an Olympic athlete. There is doubtless a strong natural disposition in all three cases, but there is also hard work and arduous training. He is something more than a very good man. He is also something more than a mystic. Neither is enough alone. It might be said that he is a combination of the two. A mystic may receive spontaneous visions and experiences like unearned largesse; but so long as he is impure his egoism will cloud or distort his experiences, ultimately to frustrate them. Whole-hearted dedication and severe training are necessary.

There is power as well as goodness in a saint.

The training may take various forms. It may consist more of mortification or loving service of one's fellows or solitary prayer and meditation, but whatever its forms they have always been provided by religion. In Hinduism and Islam this is clear to see. Ample records remain of the gurus, their ashrams, their modes of training; and some of their successors still practise today, whether or not with the full potency that the great teachers of the past had. In Christianity it was the same, though more concealed. One anonymous 14th century classic, 'The Cloud of Unknowing', even describes its form of training in some detail. Characteristically, the author prefaces it with a stern warning to those who are not pledged to the training but merely inquisitive not to read it.

And today? Today the religions have grown ineffectual in their vertical training no less than in their horizontal. That is not to say that nobody ever obeys the moral injunctions of his religion or undergoes spiritual training, but by and large the hedges are down and the ladders broken. And just as Frank Buchman instituted a moral discipline independent of any religion on the horizontal plane, so did Ramana Maharshi a spiritual discipline on the vertical. He was well versed in Hindu philosophy, but in explaining to non-Hindus he used neither Sanskrit terminology nor Hindu philosophical concepts but simply told them to seek the essential Self of them; just as Buchman was a devout Christian but never tried to thrust his Christianity on others.

I have no doubt that if someone had come and told Frank Buchman: "I am following the moral injunctions of my religion and I feel that that is enough. I don't feel that I need Moral Rearmament," he would have replied: "Splendid! I wish more people could say that." Similarly, I have no doubt that if someone who was following a traditional discipline under a realized guru in his

own religion had told the Maharshi so, the Maharshi would have approved just as fully. But such cases must be very rare. What paths are still valid, and where are the guides? There are some who try to follow guides who are not realized men, but that can't take them far; it is not much better than play-acting. Swami Brahmananda (who was the principal successor to Sri Ramakrishna in the training of disciples, as Swami Vivekananda was in organisation and propaganda) has expressed this very clearly. "Ordinary people understand by the term 'Guru' a person who whispers some mantra into the ear of the disciple. They do not care whether he possesses all the qualifications of a true Master. But today such a conception is losing ground. It is now recognised that none but a realized soul is qualified to be a spiritual teacher. #He who does not know the path himself cannot show it to others."²

If, then, as this article contends, Frank Buchman and Ramana Maharshi were performing identical functions in providing a universal substitute for the fast-vanishing guidance formerly offered by the religions, the former on the horizontal plane and the latter on the vertical, would it be possible and advantageous for the two movements to combine? They cannot do so completely. In the first place, MRA is likely to appeal to far greater numbers, since more people are drawn by nature to outer activity than to inner effort. At the same time, it does seem that the Maharshi's path of Self-enquiry, being by nature independent of the creed and ritual of any religion, could supply

that intellectual element which is so conspicuously lacking in MRA, without the danger of tying it down to any one religion and thereby shutting it off from others. In doing so it would remove its greatest, though perhaps not most apparent, weakness and increase its power. It could not, of course, be made compulsory, any more than MRA itself can, for the Spirit bloweth where it listeth; but for those who did take it up it would supply what may be lacking now. This would imply no change in the injunctions given by the Maharshi, since he encouraged his followers to practise Self-enquiry in the life of the world and not in solitude and renunciation.

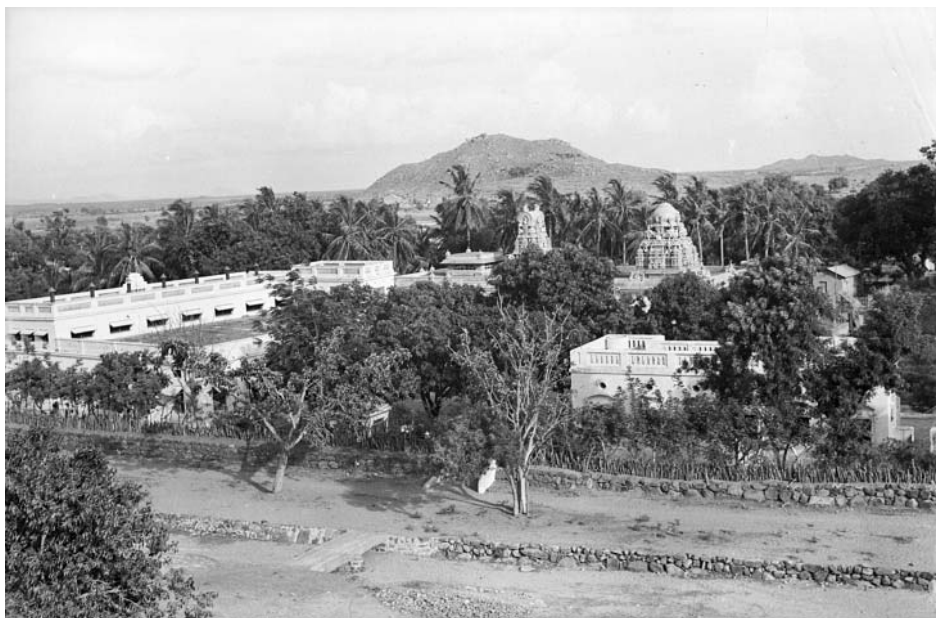
So far as the opposite influence is concerned, the Maharshi's training does naturally presume high moral standards. Being a war on the ego, it is ipso facto a war on egoism. Arthur Osborne explains that succinctly in *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in His Own Words*. "Sin and evil of every kind are the result of egoism unrestrained by consideration for the injury caused to others or the deleterious effect on the sinner's own character. Religions guard against them by moral and disciplinary codes and emotional appeals, seeking to keep the ego within bounds and prevent its trespassing into forbidden places. However, a spiritual path that is so radical and direct as to deny the ego itself does not need to attend specifically to the various excesses of egoism. All egoism has to be renounced. Therefore non-duality turns the attack on the ego itself, not on its specific manifestations."³

2. *Spiritual Instructions* by Swami Brahmananda, quoted in *Prabuddha Bharata*, Oct, 1963 issue.

3. Pp. 41-2 of the edition by Rider & Co., London; pp. 45-6 of the Sri Ramanasramam edition.

It is One without a second: it is not the object of perception; it is one's very Self. So one can that it is not to be expressed or described.

- Shankara, *Commentary on the Gita*, XIII, 2.



Ashram Bulletin

THE GREAT TRANSITION

On Friday the doctors and attendants knew it was the last day. In the morning he again bade them go and meditate. About noon, when liquid food was brought for him, he asked the time, punctual as ever, but then added, "But henceforth time doesn't matter."

Delicately expressing recognition of their long years of service, he said to the attendants, "The English have a word 'thanks' but we only say santosham (I am pleased)."

In the morning the long crowd filed past the open doorway silent with grief and apprehension, and again between four and five in the evening. The disease-racked body they saw there was shrunken, the ribs protruding, the skin blackened, it was a pitiable vestige of pain. And yet at some time during these last few days each devotee received a direct, luminous, penetrating look of

recognition which he felt as a parting infusion of Grace.

After darshan that evening the devotees did not disperse to their homes. Apprehension held them there. At about sunset Sri Bhagavan told the attendants to sit him up. They knew already that every movement, every touch was painful, but he told them not to worry about that. He sat with one of the attendants supporting his head. A doctor began to give him oxygen but with a wave of his right hand he motioned him away. There were about a dozen persons in the small room, doctors and attendants.

Two of the attendants were fanning him, and the devotees outside gazed spellbound at the moving fans through the window, a sign that there was still a living body to fan. A reporter of a large American magazine moved about restlessly, uneasy at having been impressed despite himself and determined not to write his story till he got

away from Tiruvannamalai to conditions that he considered normal. With him was a French press-photographer.

Unexpectedly, a group of devotees sitting on the veranda outside the hall began singing 'Arunachala-Siva'. On hearing it, Sri Bhagavan's eyes opened and shone. He gave a brief smile of indescribable tenderness. From the outer edges of his eyes tears of bliss rolled down. One more deep breath, and no more. There was no struggle, no spasm, no other sign of death: only that the next breath did not come.

For a few moments people stood bewildered. The singing continued. The French press-photographer came up to me and asked at what precise minute it had happened. Resenting it as journalistic callousness, I replied brusquely that I did not know, and then I suddenly recalled Sri Bhagavan's unfailing courtesy and answered precisely that it was 8.47. He said, and I could hear now that he was excited, that he had been pacing the road outside and at that very moment an enormous star had trailed slowly across the sky. Many had seen it, even as far away as Madras, and felt what it portended. It passed to the north-east towards the peak of Arunachala.

After the first numbness there was a wild burst of grief. The body was carried out on to the veranda in a sitting posture. Men and women crowded up to the veranda railing to see. A woman fainted. Others sobbed aloud.

The body was placed garlanded upon a couch in the hall and the devotees thronged there and sat around it. One had expected

the face to be rock-like in samadhi, but found it instead so marked by pain that it gripped one's heart. Only gradually during the night the air of mysterious composure returned to it.

All that night devotees sat in the large hall and townsfolk passed through in awed silence. Processions streamed from the town and back singing 'Arunachala-Siva'. Some of the devotees in the hall sang songs of praise and grief; others sat silent. What was most noticeable was not the grief but the calm beneath it, for they were men and women deprived of him whose Grace had been the very meaning of their life. Already that first night and much more during the days that followed, it became clear how vital had been his words: The word "I am not going away. Where could I go? I am here." The word 'here' does not imply any limitation but rather that the Self is, that there is no going, no changing, for That which is Universal. Nevertheless, as devotees felt the inner Presence of Bhagavan and as they felt the continued Divine Presence at Tiruvannamalai, they began to regard it as a promise full of love and solicitude.

During the night of vigil a decision had to be taken as to the burial. It had been thought that



The last photograph

the body might be interred in the new hall, but many devotees opposed the idea. They felt that the hall was, in a sense, an adjunct to the temple and would make the shrine of Sri Bhagavan seem subordinate to that of the Mother, reversing the true order of things. Next day, by general agreement, a pit was dug and the body interred with divine honours in the space between the old hall and the temple. The crowd, packed tight, looked on in silent grief. No more the beloved face, no more the sound of his voice; henceforth the lingam of polished black stone, the symbol of Siva, over the tomb was the outer sign, and inwardly his footprints in the heart.

CONTINUED PRESENCE

The crowds dispersed and the Ashram seemed an abandoned place, like a grate with the fire gone out. And yet there was not the wild grief and despair that has so often followed the departure of a Spiritual Master from earth. The normality that had been so pronounced still continued. It began to be apparent with what care and compassion Sri Bhagavan had prepared his devotees for this. Nevertheless, during those first days and weeks of bereavement few cared to remain at Tiruvannamalai, and some who would have cared to could not.

Many years previously a will had been drawn up stating how the Ashram was to be run when the Master was no longer bodily present. A group of devotees took this to Sri Bhagavan and he read it through very carefully and showed approval, after which they all signed as witnesses. Briefly, it stated that puja (ritualistic worship) should be performed at his tomb and that of the mother, that the family of Niranjanananda Swami's son should be supported, and that the spiritual centre of Tiruvannamalai should be kept alive.

Everywhere his Presence is felt, and yet there

AN APPEAL

The Managing Committee of SRI RAMANASRAMAM has now resolved to open a roll of Donors and Life Members, the contribution being Rs. 1,000/- and upwards for the former and Rs. 100/- and upwards for the latter (£100 & \$300 and £10 & \$30).

Such contributions will be deposited in a Bank and the interest realised thereon utilised for the upkeep of the Ashram and for providing facilities for its members and visitors.

The Members who so contribute will have the satisfaction of helping the Ashram build up a capital fund and also of forwarding its activities by enabling it to avail itself of the interest thereon.

The Management request you kindly to enrol yourself as a Donor or Life Member and also to recommend such of your friends to do so as may feel an urge.

May the Grace of Sri Maharshi be ever with you and yours.

T. N. VENKATARAMAN.

President.

B. S. RANGANATHAM

Secretary.

are differences of atmosphere. Morning and evening there is parayanam (chanting of the Vedas) before the tomb, as there used to be before his bodily presence, and at the same hours. As the devotees sit there in meditation it is the same as when they sat before him in the hall, the same power, the same subtlety of guidance. During parayanam, puja is performed at the tomb and the 108 names of Bhagavan are recited. But in the old hall is a softer, mellower atmosphere breathing the intimacy of his long abidance. Some months after the Mahasamadhi (leaving the body) this hall was damaged by a fire that broke out, but was fortunately not destroyed.

There is also the little room where the last days and hours were spent. A large portrait which hangs there seems to live and respond to devotion. Here are the various objects that Sri Bhagavan used or touched - his staff and water

vessel, a peacock fan, the revolving bookcase, many little objects. And the couch now forever empty. There is something infinitely poignant, inexpressibly gracious about the room.

In the new hall a statue of Sri Bhagavan has been installed. It was one of the terms of the will that a statue should be set up, but no sculptor has yet been found to make one adequate. He would have to feel the mystery of Sri Bhagavan, to be inspired by him, for it is not a question of rendering human features but the divine power and beauty that shone through them.

Not only the Ashram premises are hallowed but all the neighbourhood around. The peace that abides there encompasses and permeates: no passive peace but a vibrant exhilaration. The very air is redolent with his Presence.

True, his Presence is not confined to Tiruvannamalai. It never was. The devotees, wherever they may be, find his Grace and support, his inner Presence, not merely as potent but even more potent now than before. And yet, now as before, the solace of a visit to Tiruvannamalai sinks into the soul and residence there has a beauty hard to describe.

NO RETURN

There have been Saints who have promised to return to earth for the renewed guidance of their devotees in life after life, but Sri Bhagavan was the complete Jnani in whom there is not even that vestige of an ego that may indicate rebirth, and the devotees understood this. His promise was different. "I am not going away. Where could I go? I am here." Not even "I shall be here" but "I am here", for to the Gnani there is no change, no time, no difference of past and future, no going away, only the eternal 'Now' in which the whole of the time is poised, the universal, spaceless 'Here'. What he affirmed

was his continued, uninterrupted Presence, his continued guidance. Long ago he had told Sivaprakasam Pillai, "He who has won the Grace of the Guru shall undoubtedly be saved and never forsaken," and when devotees spoke during the last sickness as though he was forsaking them and pleaded their weakness and continued need of him he retorted, as already mentioned, "You attach too much importance to the body."

They quickly discovered how true this was. More than ever he has become the Inner Guru. Those who depended on him feel his guidance more actively, more potently now. Their thoughts are riveted on him more constantly. The vichara, leading to the Inner Guru, has grown easier and more accessible. Meditation brings a more immediate flow of Grace. The repercussion of actions, good and bad alike, is more swift and strong.

After the first shock of bereavement devotees began to be drawn back to Tiruvannamalai. The mystery of Arunachala Hill also has become more accessible. There were many formerly who felt nothing of its power, for whom it was just a hill of rock and earth and shrubs like any other. But from the time when the Spirit left the body and a bright star trailed towards the Hill devotees have felt more directly that it is holy ground; they have felt in it the mystery of Bhagavan.¹

SHRINE AND ASHRAM

'Naturally, there are not the same crowds at the Maharshi's Ashram at Tiruvannamalai that there were during his lifetime. Many of these were visitors eager to have a sight of the holy man. Many also, especially from Western countries, were intellectuals, students of philosophy or psychology, who came to pose

1. *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge*, pp. 185-192, by Arthur Osborne, Rider & Co.

academic questions. It is possible that a higher percentage of these who come now are genuine seekers or true devotees.

‘The tomb of the Maharshi was made just outside the old meditation hall where he sat with his devotees for so many years. The beginnings have been made of a shrine over it of beautiful polished black and grey stone from Arunachala, but funds are awaited to complete it.

‘There is no spiritual head of the Ashram in human form. The Presence of the Maharshi is so powerful and pervading that it would be a redundancy to have some person there as a guru. Instructions for meditation are given in his writings and sayings; spiritual support comes direct from him; all that is needed is practice.’²

MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION

During the lifetime of the Maharshi the Ashram



The Sarvadhikari

had been run by his younger brother Sri Niranjanananda Swami, known also as Chinnaswamy or ‘the Little Swami’ and entitled the Sarvadhikari or Governor. He took sannyasa after the early death of his wife, while the Maharshi was still living in a cave on Arunachala; and when the Maharshi came down to the foot of the hill after his mother’s death

and took up his abode there, it was he who organised the Ashram that we now know. After

the death of the Maharshi a Committee of devotees was formed to advise him but he continued the Ashram management.

The Sarvadhikari did not long outlive the Maharshi. He died on January 29, 1953. By the general wish of the devotees he was buried in the Ashram precincts and a small shrine erected where he lay. He was succeeded by his son, T. N. Venkataraman, who is the present President of the Ashram. Even before becoming the President, he had been serving in the Ashram from 1938. He is fondly addressed by fellow-devotees as ‘Venkatoo’.

The premises are kept clean and tidy, meals are served punctually, all are free to sit and meditate, and apart from that the Ashram management is of little concern to visitors. It is better however, to write to the President before coming because now also, as in the lifetime of the Maharshi, there is often difficulty in finding accommodation. As a reflection of the informality of the Maharshi’s teaching and method of training, the Ashram has never undertaken precise or ample arrangements for visitors. Even for those who stay in its guesthouse there is no tariff of charges. They are expected to make a donation when they leave, but it is up to them.

TIRUVANNAMALAI

‘It is no accident that the Maharshi made Tiruvannamalai and its sacred mountain of Arunachala his home. Each of the spiritual centres of India has its own character and its own line of tradition; and among them all it is Tiruvannamalai (or Arunachala) that represents the highest and most direct, the most formless and least ritualistic of paths, that is the path of Self-enquiry, the gateway to which is the silent initiation. This is expressed in the old Tamil saying: “To see Chidambaram, to be born at Tiruvarur, to die at Banaras or even to think of

2. Sri Ramanasramam, *Yesterday and Today*, pp. 5-6, Sri Ramanasramam.

Arunachala is to be assured of Liberation.” “Even to think of” because in the case of the direct path physical contact is not necessary.

‘Tiruvannamalai is a medium sized South Indian town, 120 miles south-west of Madras. There is railway connection but journey by bus is more direct and convenient, taking less than five hours. There are very good buses, including one State Government Express bus, plying between Madras and Tiruvannamalai. The prefix ‘Tiru’ means ‘blessed’ or ‘auspicious’, like the prefix ‘Sri’ in the names of North Indian towns. ‘Malai’ means ‘mountain’ and ‘Anna’ ‘supreme’, so that the name signifies, ‘The auspicious supreme mountain’. It is an ancient town with a large and splendid temple. There are certain yearly festivals when it is crowded with pilgrims from all over South India. Especially is this so at Karthigai (known also as Deepam), falling usually in November (it is impossible to give the exact date of an Indian festival, as they vary with the phases of the moon, like the Christian Easter). On this occasion a beacon of clarified butter contributed by devotees and pilgrims is lit at nightfall on the summit of the mountain and burns the whole night, often indeed the whole of the following day and night also. At the Ashram itself, of course, the greatest festivals are the anniversaries of the birth and death of the Maharshi (Jayanti and Aradhana), falling respectively at the winter solstice and the spring equinox.”³

PUBLICATIONS

During his lifetime the Maharshi showed great interest in Ashram publications and himself revised proofs and made revisions. One of the signs of the continued vitality of the Ashram since his death is the number of its books that have needed new editions and the number of new books it has published. Below is a complete list of books published by the Ashram.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 6-8.

ADVAITA BODHA DEEPIKA: Translated into English for the first time from an ancient classic at the instance of Sri Maharshi.

BHAGAVAN RAMANA: A Sketch of Maharshi’s Life-By Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan.

CRUMBS FROM HIS TABLE: Teachings and Talks of Sri Maharshi - Reprinted after 20 years - Gives useful hints in understanding Maharshi’s teachings.

DAY BY DAY WITH BHAGAVAN: From the Diary of A. Devaraja Mudaliar - a recording of the enchanting talks by the Maharshi with numerous devotees from far and near, covering a period of two years (1945 & 1946), Vol. I, covering May to July 1946 - Volume II covering the rest of the above period, 1945-46. [Now in one volume]

FIVE HYMNS TO SRI ARUNACHALA: English translation of the five famous Hymns composed by the Maharshi, four in Tamil and one in Sanskrit.

GLIMPSES OF THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF RAMANA MAHARSHI: By Frank H. Humphreys. The earliest European to meet Bhagavan, in 1911, now reprinted after 36 years.

GOLDEN JUBILEE SOUVENIR: Commemorating the 50th year of the Maharshi’s advent in Tiruvannamalai, in 1946. Contains 54 articles of permanent interest by eminent devotees and admirers, both Eastern and Western.

GURU-RAMANA-VACHANA-MALA: A necklet of sayings of Guru Ramana by “WHO”, the author of MAHA YOGA. Fit for study and meditation.

LETTERS FROM SRI RAMANASRAMAM: Translated from the Telugu original of Soori Nagamma, a lady devotee: Delightful pen pictures of day-to-day life of the Maharshi, bringing out His humour, humanity and Universal love.

MAHARSHI'S GOSPEL: Books I and II: Talks with the Maharshi by several disciples on many important problems of Sadhaks. Practical advice throughout.

MAHA YOGA: By "WHO": A treatise of supreme interest to every student of Advaita, lucidly explaining Sri Ramana Maharshi's teachings in the light of Upanishadic lore.

MY RECOLLECTIONS OF BHAGAVAN: By the author of "Day by Day with Bhagavan". A delightful and instructive book describing the Magic of Bhagavan's Personality and Grace.

POEMS OF RAMANA MAHARSHI: Rendered into English by Sadhu Arunachala (Maj. A. W. Chadwick).

RAMANA ARUNACHALA: By Arthur Osborne.

RAMANA MAHARSHI & HIS PHILOSOPHY OF EXISTENCE:

By Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan: Translation with commentary on 'Ulladu Narpadu' (Reality in Forty Verses) and 'The Supplementary Forty Verses' with a sketch of Bhagavan's Life and Reflections of the Author.

REFLECTIONS ON "TALKS WITH SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI": By S. S. Cohen, author of "GURU RAMANA". Elucidating various important points raised during the TALKS with the Maharshi. A helpful guide to Sadhaks.

A SADHU'S REMINISCENCES OF RAMANA MAHARSHI: By Sadhu Arunachala (Maj. A. W. Chadwick), who came to see Bhagavan in 1935 and never went back.

SAT DARSHANA BHASHYA: By "K" (T. V. Kapali Sastri): Sanskrit rendering of Maharshi's Tamil "Ulladu Narpadu" (Reality in Forty Verses) with English translation and commentary, a detailed introduction to the subject and also a record of Talks with the Maharshi.

SELF-ENQUIRY: Instructions given to Gambhiram Seshayya by the Maharshi in his days of Silence about the year 1901. Translated from the Tamil original.

SELF-REALISATION: or Life and Teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi by B. V. Narasimha Swamy, with an epilogue by S. S. Cohen: Graphically describes the fascinating life of the Maharshi from his birth in 1879 to his Mahanirvana in April 1950.

SONG CELESTIAL: 42 Verses selected by the Maharshi from the Bhagavad Gita: Sanskrit text with English translation, with an Explanatory Note giving the significance of the verses in this selection.

SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTION: Being the Maharshi's teaching given to his disciple Natanananda. Published originally in Tamil with the title 'Upadesa Manjari' in the form of a dialogue. Revised translation.

SRI MAHARSHI: A brief Sketch of the Sage's life with 117 illustrations of the Master in different periods of life, various personalities who came into touch with him, the different spots he lived in etc. A valuable album to treasure.

SRI RAMANA, the SAGE OF ARUNAGIRI: A subjective study of the Maharshi's Life, by "Aksharajna" with a supplement containing valuable extracts from the Maharshi's teachings.

SRI RAMANA GITA: Containing the teachings of the Maharshi composed into 300 Sanskrit verses (18 Chapters) by Sri Kavyakanta Ganapati Muni with English translation by Prof. G. V. Subbaramayya. Contains very useful hints on Bhakti, Yoga and Jnana Margas with special stress on the Maharshi's unique method of 'Self-Enquiry'.

TALKS WITH SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI: A faithful record of talks with the Maharshi by numerous devotees, some of them from far-off lands, on their personal spiritual problems. The records cover a period of about four years, 1935 to 1939.

TECHNIQUE OF MAHA YOGA: A handy and practical guide to Sadhaks treading the Path of Self-Enquiry, written from the personal experience by N. R. Narayana Iyer.

THUS SPAKE RAMANA: Selected Gems from the sayings of Bhagavan. (Second Edition).

TRIPURA RAHASYA or THE MYSTERY BEYOND THE TRINITY: An ancient Sanskrit work translated into English at the instance of Bhagavan by the Recorder of “Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi” explaining the mystic Doctrine and Practice of Advaita Sadhana. Lucid, interesting and instructive.

TRUTH REVEALED: Translation of the Maharshi’s Forty Verses ‘Ulladu Narpadu’ and the Forty Supplementary Verses, and containing a Synopsis of the ‘Ulladu Narpadu’ and a preface by Grant Duff. The quintessence of Maharshi’s philosophy.

UPADESA SARAM: English translation of the Maharshi’s THIRTY VERSES, a detailed commentary and also a translation of the Thirty Verses in Sanskrit by the Maharshi himself, and in English by Major A. W. Chadwick.

WHO AM I?: Translation from the Tamil of the Maharshi’s teachings given in writing to one of his earliest disciples, Sivaprakasam Pillai, about the years 1901-1902. Contains the essence of the Maharshi’s teaching which is the path of Self-Enquiry.

Apart from our own publications, the following books also are available:

GURU RAMANA: By S. S. Cohen. Personal reminiscences and delightful notes of chats of Sri Bhagavan recorded by the writer on various dates from 1936 to 1950, and also excerpts from the author’s diary graphically describing the last two years of the Master’s life.

THE QUINTESENCE OF WISDOM: or The Thirty Verses of Sri Ramana: Freely rendered into English with an Introduction and Commentary by M. Anantanarayanan, I. C. S.,

and with a Foreword by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, President of India,

RAMANA MAHARSHI AND THE PATH OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE: By Arthur Osborne. (Rider & Co., London and Jaico Publishing House, Bombay).

COLLECTED WORKS OF RAMANA MAHARSHI: Edited by Arthur Osborne. (Rider & Co., London and Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai).

TEACHINGS OF RAMANA MAHARSHI IN HIS OWN WORDS: Edited by Arthur Osborne. (Rider & Co., London and Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai).

MILESTONES

Not only the Sarvadhikari but a number of other devotees also have been snatched away by death since the Maharshi left the Ramana body he had worn.

In particular we must mention Major Alan Chadwick, widely known as Sadhu Arunachala. He was not the first European to come here but he was the first to settle down and make the Ashram his home. He came as far back as 1935 and was here together with Paul Brunton. The difference was that he stayed on, obtaining permission from the Sarvadhikari to build himself a small house in the Ashram premises, incidentally the first private room to be built within the Ashram.

He became a familiar figure in the Ashram and a comfort to many, especially to visitors who had never seen Bhagavan in the body.

It seemed at first that the chanting of the Vedas which had been practised morning and evening in Bhagavan’s lifetime might come to an end simply because there was no one to carry it on. People regretted this, since it had been and still was a welcome occasion for meditation, the chanting itself helping to still the mind. It was



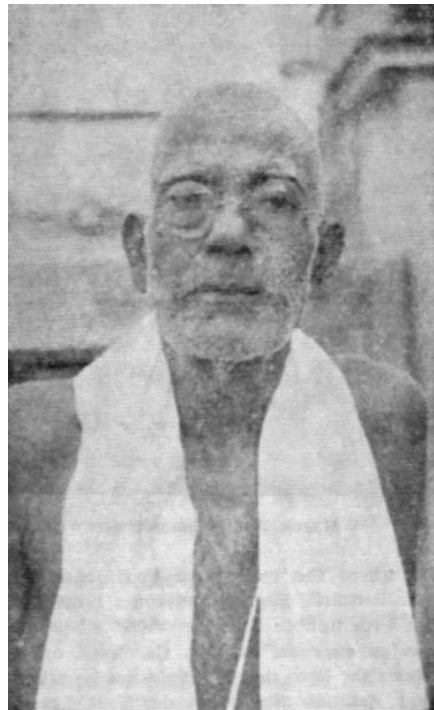
Major Alan Chadwick

Mr. Chadwick who averted the danger by organising a Patasala, that is a traditional boarding school where the boys learn Vedic chanting as well as Sanskrit, English and some general education, with tuition, board, clothing, all provided. It was an expense, but Mr. Chadwick collected donations for it so that it should not be a burden on the Ashram. Since his death it has been ably carried on by Mrs. F. Taleyarkhan. Donations for its upkeep are always welcome.

Remarkably enough, it was also Mr. Chadwick, a European, who started the Sri Chakra Poojas. These are beautiful and impressive services and are widely appreciated. They are held every Friday and full-moon day and on the 1st of every Tamil month. Devotees who wish a special prayer to be made on their behalf write to the President to be included in one of them, enclosing a fee of Rs.10.

Another prominent devotee who has left us is Swami Ramanananda Saraswathi. During Bhagavan's lifetime, it was he who, while still a householder under the name of Sri Munagala Venkataramiah, compiled the '*Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*', the largest record of Bhagavan's teachings. Since then also he has added several valuable titles, like, '*Tripura Rahasya*' and '*Advaita Bodha Deepika*', to our book list. His profound knowledge of scriptures and western philosophy and his austere life, and childlike ways made others revere him as a gem among the disciples of Bhagavan. His death caused, outwardly, a vacuum in the Asramam.

Gridalur Sambasiva Rao of Nellore, a lawyer, first came to Sri Maharshi as early as 1923, with his brother Sri Narayana Rao and his sister Smt. Lakshammal. The power and grace of Bhagavan's look overwhelmed him at one stroke, as it were. All his worries vanished and devotion surged up in him. He remained a staunch devotee till his last



Gridalur Sambasiva Rao

days. Not only that, but through him numerous families from Andhra Pradesh came to know of Sri Maharshi and received his blessings. He was a great support to the Ashram management in all its various activities. One particularly great honour was that when Sri Maharshi accepted the terms of a will drawn up for him in 1938, it was his privilege to sign on behalf of Sri Maharshi (actually Maharshi drew a line and Sambasiva Rao signed on his behalf, since Bhagavan had no name to sign). After the Mahanirvana of Sri Maharshi he was made secretary of the Ashram managing committee and he continued to serve the Ashram with the same whole-hearted zeal till his death on November 5th, 1962. The loss was a personal one to many of the inmates of the Ashram. His devotion to Sri Maharshi was complete. May he rest in peace at the feet of Bhagavan!

Sama Iyer was a deaf old man, who had served Bhagavan for a long time until, due to old age and physical debility, he asked Bhagavan to let him go, since he could no longer physically serve him. Bhagavan, laughing, said: "For such long service you deserve a pension which will be in the form of eating and keeping quiet." He also has passed away and our very old devotees still miss him in the Ashram.

V. Narayanaswami Iyer, popularly known as 'Chellam Iyer', the cashier of the Ashram (incidentally, he is also related to the Maharshi) who served the Ashram for 17 years, also passed away this year.

A number of new people have come and new houses been built to add to our small colony.

There is also a constant flow of visitors from India and abroad, the majority of whom nowadays are people who never saw Bhagavan in his lifetime.

Apart from private residences, two new guesthouses have also been put up, thanks to the donations of Sri K. Padmanabhan and Sri



V. Narayanaswami Iyer

H. C. Khanna. This is particularly useful for lady visitors, as they are not allowed to stay in the Ashram premises. For single-men a number of self-contained rooms have been built.

Work is proceeding with a shrine and meditation-hall over the Maharshi's Samadhi Shrine. The plan is ambitious but the work has to keep pace with available funds.

LIFE MEMBERS - SRI RAMANASRAMAM

H. C. Khanna, Kanpur.
D. Subbanna, Bangalore.
K. S. N. Rao, New Delhi.
M. Sadasiva Setty, Chikmagalur.
A. R. Narayana Rao, Madras.
V. Venkatakrishniah, Nellore.
C. Padmanabha Rao, Tirupathi.
G. Sesha Reddi, Nellore.
Y. Ramakrishna Prasad, Madras.
Narendra C. Amin, Mangalore.

A. R. Natarajan, Bangalore.
 Vegi Venkateswara Rao, Visakhapatnam.
 G. V. Subbaramayya, Nidubrolu.
 Penmachra Jegannatha Raju, Jinnur.
 A. K. Ramachandra Iyer, Madras.
 Bh. Venkata Lakshmi Narasimha Raju, Jinnur.
 Rayavarapu Sankarayya, Nellore.
 A. Dasaradha Rami Reddi, Nellore.
 M. Suryanarayana Iyer, Nellore.
 R. V. Raghavan, Calcutta.
 S. Krishnamurthy, Neyveli.
 T. R. G. Krishnan, Bangalore.
 Tupili Ramana Reddy, Nellore.
 Mr. & Mrs. Suresh Chandra Khanna, Kanpur,

THE JOURNAL, ITS BIRTH

A short note might be added on the genesis of 'The Mountain Path', since this also is Ashram news. It had been felt long back, even in the lifetime of Bhagavan, that there should be an Ashram journal. It was even suggested to him, but he did not respond; his face showed no interest, so the matter was allowed to drop. Bhagavan very seldom said no, but so tremendous was the power of his presence that if he did not show interest and encouragement none would presume to undertake a project.

After he left the body the idea was again considered but again came to nothing. It was mentioned to the present editor who replied, as he then felt, that he had neither the ability nor the interest to undertake such a task.

As late as September 1963 it occurred independently to both the editor and the managing editor that there should be an Ashram news bulletin published annually at the time of Sri Bhagavan's Jayanti (birth anniversary) and distributed free to devotees, as so many who were not able to come here liked to be kept in touch with developments. A preliminary draught of this was written and shown to a member of the Ashram managing committee, and he immediately suggested that it

should be not an annual but a quarterly and should contain articles also. That, of course, raised questions of writing, organization and finance.

In a clear intuition from Bhagavan it occurred to these concerned that this was the solution, that the time had now come and an Ashram journal was now appropriate, and before the end of September the project of 'The Mountain Path' was agreed upon. There are times when nothing goes right, the wheels are not greased, a project cannot move forward; this was just the opposite. From the very beginning every one co-operated, and gladly, not grudgingly. Blessings and messages of goodwill flowed in, the immediate financial problems were surmounted, the printer took the work up in a spirit of service to Bhagavan, with a short but impressive puja a newly constructed office was opened for the journal at the Ashram, people contributed articles, encouragement came from all sides, hundreds of people took out advance subscriptions, purely on trust, so that in December, a bare three months from its first conception, it is already a full grown reality. If we feel confidence now that it is due to come before the public, it is not confidence in our own work or powers but in the Grace of Bhagavan which we feel so strongly to be on this venture.

THE MOUNTAIN PATH LIFE SUBSCRIBERS

V. Subramanian, Durgapur.
 B. S. Ranganathan, Nellore.
 Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami, Madras.
 Miss Elizabeth Merston, Sri Ramanagar,
 K. K. Nambiar, Bombay.
 Dwarakanatha Reddy, Chittoor.
 A. S. K. R. Trust, Madras.
 Satyanarayan Tandon, Kanpur.
 M. A. Chidambaram, Madras.
 M. M. Varma, Jaipur.
 S. S. V. S. Muthiah Chettiar, Tiruvannamalai.
 A. R. Narayana Rao, Madras.

D. S. Sastri, Madras.
Mukund M. Thakore, Ahmedabad.
N. Balarama Reddi, Vutukuru.
Ashok Pal Singh, Bombay.
Rani Padmawati Devi, Bhopal.
Miss Mahalakshmi, Madras.
K. Gopalrao, Bombay.
V. Seshadri, Calcutta.
Lieut. D. Subbanna, Bangalore.

Bhupen Champaklal, Bombay.
G. J. Yorke, Gloucester, England.
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Trudel Elasaesser, Waldhof, Germany.
Prof. Dr. Friedrich W. Funke, Seelscheid, Germany.
Louise Trachsler, Coppet, Switzerland.
Henri Hartung, Paris.

SRI RAMANASRAMAM CHARITIES

SRI RAMANASRAMAM TIRUVANNAMALAI

AN ANNOUNCEMENT

“SRI RAMANASRAMAM CHARITIES, TIRUVANNAMALAI” is a newly registered body under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860 with the following objects:

1. To construct an Auditorium and Library and a Reading Room.
2. To hold discourses periodically, sometimes daily, on Indian Philosophy and Culture including those relating to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.
3. To be a centre for the diffusion of Spiritual Knowledge.
4. To house books and periodicals on Eastern and Western Philosophy and depicting different cultural aspects of life in India and other countries.
5. To run a school where the students are taught Sanskrit, English, Tamil, Vedas and Upanishads, and Mathematics etc. and lodging.
6. To run a dispensary where medical attention is given free of charge.

In carrying out the above objects of general public utility, the Association shall not undertake the carrying on of any activity for profit.

The benefits of the Association will be open to all without any disqualifications by reason only of religion, community, caste, creed, race or sex.

On this body being registered on 28-10-1963, the Central Board of Revenue, Government of India, New Delhi, in their Notification, F. No. 68/17/63-I.T. dated 19th November 1963, have decided that donations made to SRI RAMANASRAMAM CHARITIES, TIRUVANNAMALAI, MADRAS STATE, would be entitled to the benefit of the exemption under Sec. 88 of the Income-tax Act, 1961 in the hands of donors, subject to the limits specified therein and the donations will also be exempted from Gift Tax.

The Management of Sri Ramanasramam appeal to the public in general and to the devotees of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi to contribute liberally to the “SRI RAMANASRAMAM CHARITIES, TIRUVANNAMALAI” so as to enable them to carry on the objects specified above, particularly item (1), the construction of which is on hand.

It may please be noted that all remittances to Sri Ramanasramam Charities by Cheques, Drafts or Money Orders should be made payable to SRI RAMANASRAMAM CHARITIES only.

T. N. VENKATARAMAN,
President.

BOOK REVIEWS¹

GOD-EXPERIENCE: By Swami Ramdas (Bhavan's Book University, Chaupatty, Bombay. Rs. 2; 3s. 6d.; \$ 0.90.)

The late Swami Ramdas was that rare phenomenon of a bhakta or devotee who won through by sheer force of devotion to at least glimpses of Identity. There was a spirit of love and purity and an all-pervading happiness in his ashram. Fittingly was it called 'Anandashram'. Many appreciated particularly the evening hours when he would sit amid his disciples, talking to them (in English), laughing and joking, mingling reminiscence with upadesa (spiritual instruction).

Fortunately a disciple took down these talks over a period and made a book of them which was published under the name of God-Experience just about the time the Swami left us.

He taught a path of devotion expressed in invocation of the Divine Name, and into this he initiated aspirants, Hindu and Western alike, indifferent to the outer forms of orthodoxy. In reading his instructions, however, it must be remembered that he considered this initiation necessary and that without it the invocation has not the same potency that he gave it. And he did give potency. There was no doubting his power as a guru.

Sometimes he speaks as a pure bhakta: "Unless you have a burning aspiration for God, the mind cannot be fixed on Him. Where your love is, there your mind is. Just as a miser constantly thinks of money and money alone, so a devotee has exclusive devotion to God When you have intense love for God, everything else is forgotten. Then you will realise God."

Sometimes again he speaks from the point of view of Identity and shows how devotion can lead to it by its very intensity. "Your search for God is your search for the Atman or Self. At the end of your search you will realize that you are He. You start with duality and end in non-duality. Then you know that you have been seeking your own Self, thinking that the Self was different from you. Ultimately you know you are that Self itself. There ends your quest."

This is a book full of love and understanding, the outpourings of a true saint. Aspirants are recommended to keep it by them and dip into it again and again for solace in moods of depression and for invigoration when the way seems hard. There is very little in it that is technically Hindu, so Jewish, Christian and Muslim seekers will also find it helpful.

CRUMBS FROM HIS TABLE: By Ramanananda Swarnagiri. (Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai. Rs. 1.)

Crumbs from His Table is the first book of reminiscences about the Maharshi ever written. The author, who is now unfortunately no longer with us, came to him as early as 1934. In 1936 he published this record for free distribution to any of the then limited number of devotees who cared to ask for it. Next year a second free edition was issued and then it was allowed to go out of print. The Asramam is certainly well advised in reviving a little work which will have a strong appeal to devotees of Bhagavan and students of his teaching. It contains a number of characteristic incidents showing how Bhagavan's devotees were drawn to him and a number of useful expositions. In particular, there is a fuller and clearer exposition of the danger of manolaya

1. All unsigned Reviews are by the Editor.

than is to be found in any of the other books.

In editing the new edition, the Ashram has respected the author's aversion to the use of the first person singular pronoun, although at times it makes the style rather involved. It is not uncommon to meet an aspirant who refuses to refer to himself as 'I', but Bhagavan did not encourage any such eccentricity. It is also characteristic of him that he did not forbid it. He liked his devotees to be normal in speech, as in dress and behaviour, but the urge had to come from within; as a general rule he avoided giving orders. Actually, if there is no 'I' there can be no 'you' or 'he', so intercourse would be pretty difficult. One has to play the game of individual beings, so one might as well use its language.

THE WAY OF LIGHT: By T. V. Kapali Sastri. (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, Rs. 8.)

Kapali Sastri was a disciple of Ganapati Muni,² and both of them were devotees of Sri Ramana Maharshi. Ganapati Muni was responsible for Sri Ramana Gita, besides composing Sanskrit hymns to the Maharshi, while Kapali Sastri composed Sat Darshana Bhashya a commentary on the Maharshi's Forty Verses preceded by a very informative series of talks.

Both master and disciple, however, were interested rather in the Divine Mother and the intermediary worlds with the powers and experiences therein accessible than in the direct path of Advaita taught by the Maharshi. Kapali Sastri actually said of himself: "I am a Tantric through and through - to my marrow I was a Tantric I know the Tantra Sadhana in a very familiar way and can utilise my knowledge of the World-Power in an effective manner." It is natural, therefore, that on the death of Ganapati Muni he found the sadhana of Sri Aurobindo

and the Mother more congenial and transferred himself to their Ashram at Pondicherry. There he could hear statements such as: "By occult training one can enter the Psychic world and explore it as one does a country," instead of being told: "To have powers there must be others to whom to display them; therefore the wise man does not give them a thought," or: "Even if powers come spontaneously they should be rejected. They are like ropes to tether a beast; sooner or later they drag a man back from his pursuit of Moksha (Liberation)."

As he grew older and more mature, Kapali Sastri began to give advice and guidance to others, and notably to M. P. Pandit, the compiler and editor of this book, while at the same time himself remaining a devoted disciple. This book is made up of fragments of diary and correspondence, advice, obiter dicta and tributes to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. There is much to be found in it that is interesting and significant.

DR. RANADE'S LIFE OF LIGHT: By M. S. Deshpande. (Bhavan's Book University, Chaupatty, Bombay-7. Rs. 2; 3s. 6d.; \$0.90.)

Dr. Rambhau Ranade's long life ended as recently as 1957. He was esteemed in the world of professional philosophers, being for a number of years head of the department of philosophy at Allahabad University. However, his books also appealed to a far wider public. In particular, many find interest in his 'Pathway to God' series (in Marathi literature, in Kannada literature and in Hindi literature, all three published in a uniform edition with this life of him) giving accounts of the lives, experiences and teachings of the saints.

More than all this, however, he was a lifelong sadhaka or seeker. He was a disciple of the eminent guru Sri Bhausaheb Maharaj, who prescribed the discipline of meditation on the Divine Name. Using this, he grew in sanctity

2. For whom see chapter X of my '*Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge*,' Riders and Jaico.

and enjoyed many spiritual experiences. Indeed, he declared that in his 'Pathway to God' books he had described no experience of the saints which he himself had not known. In later years, after the death of Sri Maharaj and of the latter's immediate successor, he himself became a guru, prescribing the same path of meditation on the Divine Name.

It is on this last phase of his life that his disciple, M. S. Deshpande, most concentrates, referring to him reverentially as Gurudev.

There is no doubt about the saintliness of Dr. Ranade or about the beneficent influence he exerted on his disciples. Nevertheless, a follower of the direct path laid down by Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi cannot but wonder at this preoccupation with experiences. What do they matter? Whether physical experiences enjoyed through the senses or subtle ones coming independent of them, they are alike on the individual plane. There is still the trinity of seer-sight-seen. That is not the way to Liberation from form into the Reality of Oneness, the Supreme Identity.

LIFE AND TEACHING OF BRAMAGNA MA: By Swami Prabuddhananda. (Oxford Book Co., Park St., Calcutta-16. Rs. 5.50).

It is not the nature or destiny (the two are the same) of every saint to be well known. It may be that one less advanced is impelled to greater publicity. Bramagna Ma was a Bengali woman saint of the highest Realization, teaching pure Advaita (Identity). The instructions she gave were of the most profound, but she refused to accept more than about half a dozen disciples and would not let them write about her or make her known. That was not her destiny, she said.

After her death in 1935 her disciple and attendant, Swami Prabuddhnanda, came to live for some time at Sri Ramanasramam. Major

Chadwick was interested to learn about her life and teaching, so, as the Swami was at the time maintaining silence and could not give an oral account, he wrote one out. It is this which, preserved in typescript for many years, forms the nucleus of the present book. It has a quiet certitude and pure beauty which will captivate true seekers. So will the frontispiece photograph of Bramagna Ma.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: A Forgotten Chapter of His Life. By Beni Shanker Sharma. (Oxford Book Co., Park St., Calcutta-16. Rs. 10).

Even before setting forth for America and fame, Swami Vivekananda was already a dominating figure. He travelled, often on foot, the length and breadth of India, impressing high and low alike with his eloquence and magnetism. One of his first friends and staunchest disciples was the Raja of Khetri. Mr. Sharma has discovered and edited a considerable correspondence between them in the archives of the former princely state. This will be a welcome addition to the libraries of all students of the Swami.

ESSAYS IN PHILOSOPHY: Presented to Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan on his Fiftieth Birthday. (Ganesh, Madras. Rs. 25).

Prof. Mahadevan, Head of the Philosophy Department of Madras University, is an Advaitin among the philosophers and a philosopher among the Advaitins. While a profound student of Sanskrit and of classical Indian philosophy, he is also thoroughly at home with Western philosophy, with whose exponents he can argue on their own terms. He is, however, grounded in the Eastern concept that philosophy is to be not merely learned but lived. Therefore he is not only a professor of philosophy but also a devotee of Ramana Maharshi.

The 52 essays, contributed by as many writers, in this presentation volume fittingly therefore range over the field of Hindu, Western and Buddhist philosophy. They also branch out to cover a religious thinker such as Simone Weil, a social idealist such as Gandhi, and a mystic such as Tayumanavar.

L'ESOTERISME DE DANTE: fr. 200; **LE ROI DU MONDE:** fr. 350; **LA GRANDE TRIADE:** fr. 590: all three by Rene Guenon, Published by Gallimard, Paris.

It was a very different world into which Rene Guenon burst in the early decades of this century, a world which still believed in progress and where there seemed no escape from materialism and superficiality. With vast erudition, dazzling lucidity, ruthless logic and scathing sarcasm for any who differed, he challenged the whole edifice of modern civilisation. In book after book, article after article, he exposed the brittle shams of our world and in contrast pointed to the profound symbolism and traditional wisdom of the past and the East. For the individual also he showed how tawdry are all modern ideals compared with the traditional striving for Realization.

His campaign was not mere theory. If it had been it would have remained impotent. Central to it was the proclamation that Being is one; therefore you cannot be other than the One, because there is no other; therefore to realize your true Self is to realize the Supreme Identity; and this can be done. To many, including the writer of this review, he showed the possibility of escape from the suffocating frustrations of modern life to the deep inner contentment of the Spirit. He had his limitations and blind spots, none knows it better; but in spite of that it was through him that my feet were set on the

3. *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, P. 41, Sri Ramanasramam edition, p. 47 Rider's edition.

mountain path and that Grace became abundant.

If there are many in the West today, despite the still accelerating superficiality and materialism, who understand that there is a meaning and purpose to life and set forth upon its quest by one path or another, it is to a very large extent due to his influence, direct or indirect. Even the direct influence is still working, as we see here at Arunachala from the many who owe their first awakening to him out of those who turn to Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi. He himself, unfortunately, never understood that Bhagavan had opened a new path for mankind, free from the outer forms of orthodoxy, but remained to the end like those who failed to recognise Christ because he had not come in the form they expected.

Out of print for some years, his books are now being reprinted and new ones compiled from the articles he wrote. The first of those here under notice points out the esoteric symbolism of the West's greatest Mediaeval poet, showing his *Divine Comedy* to be an allegory of the indirect spiritual path of Hermetism, struggling upwards stage by stage.

The second tries to avoid being too explicit on a concealed topic: the secret spiritual guidance of the world. Those interested in cosmic and mundane organisation will find it fascinating. For those, however, who follow the Jnana-marga (Path of Knowledge), seeing the whole universe as a projection of the mind, the same applies that Bhagavan said about studying the subtle aspects of the individual: "Just as it is futile to examine the rubbish that has to be swept up only to be thrown away, so it is futile for him who seeks to know the Self to set to work enumerating the tattvas that envelop the Self and examining them instead of casting them away. He should consider the phenomenal world with reference to himself merely as a dream."³

The third is a compilation of articles on symbolism. It may be asked how reading about the symbolism of the spiral and the pyramid, the swastika and the three-dimensional cross, helps a man towards Liberation. The answer perhaps is that constant hammering away at the true meaning of symbolism and the symbolical nature of the universe gradually tears a man's mind away from the crude materialism to which it had been conditioned and orientates it to a true sense of values, thus enabling him eventually to rise beyond symbolism to That which is symbolised, Happpy are those who need no such weaning.

ASK THE AWAKENED, THE NEGATIVE WAY: By Wei Wu Wei, (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 30s.)

'Ask the Awakened' forms a trilogy with the author's previous two books, 'Fingers Pointing Towards the Moon' and 'Why Lazarus Laughed'. It is written in the same style, that is the ancient form of sutras rather than the modern form of logical deduction.

Examples: "Form is the seeing of form: it has no independent existence. Form as the object of seeing is inexistent. The thought itself of form is the seeing of form."

"Karma is an apparent cause that produces an apparent effect in the apparent world of samsara."

The book is based mainly on the Chinese Ch'an Masters from whom Japanese Zen derives. Also on the Maharshi. Really, like every book of intrinsic understanding, it is based on the author's own perception.

He calls it 'The Negative Way' because it proceeds not by asserting what is but what, including his phenomenal self that makes the assertion, is not. It is a way characterised by Hindu Sages as stripping an onion. Skin after

skin you peel off, to see what is in the centre, and when you get there, there is nothing.

What characterises the book is the author's ruthless, consistent refusal to make any compromise with duality, to accept anything at all apart from Advaita - which means anything at all, because Advaita is not anything. Constantly he comes back to the assertion that there is no objective reality: there just IS.

SOME CHRISTIAN FESTIVALS: By Elfrida Dupont. (Michael Joseph, 16S.)

How many Christians there are who no longer remember the traditional festivals of their Church! What, for instance, is Candlemas? And what Lammastide? What does Maundy Thursday commemorate? What is the feast of Michaelmas at the autumn equinox? Why are pancakes eaten on Shrove Tuesday? Who was Santa Claus and how did he become Father Christmas? Why does Whitsuntide bear its present name, and what was it formerly known as?

It is quite possible to strive in the way of Christ without knowing any of these things. Nevertheless, for a member of a Christian community they give a warmth and colour and sense of belonging. Contingent though they may be, they add a richness to the Christian way of life. They also carry echoes of earlier literature which are otherwise lost on modern readers - a ballad, for instance, beginning: "It fell about the Lammastide."

In this book the festivals are described in a pleasant style, informative but without unnecessary padding, and with a sense of reverence. The book has also a useful glossary of ritualistic and theological terminology now strange to many Christians. It is not confined to the viewpoint of any one church or sect.

- SAGITTARIUS

THE UPANISHADS: Translated by Swami Nikhilananda. (Allen and Unwin, 45s.).

The condensation of Swami Nikhilananda's four-volume annotated translation of the 11 principal Upanishads into the present single volume will probably increase its attraction for the Western general reader, for whom it is primarily intended. The translation is in clear, straightforward English, though it is a pity that the obsolete word 'verily' is dragged in, to give it a pseudo-biblical flavour. A number of technical Sanskrit terms which have no exact English equivalent are very wisely left in Sanskrit and explained in a glossary. A 50-page introduction gives a very good outline of Upanishadic teaching for the Western reader, without getting involved in the complexities of Sanskrit terminology and philosophical viewpoints.

ISLAM: By Alfred Guillaume. (Cassell, 15 s.)

It is surprising how much information about Islam the author manages to pack into this 200-page book, and without any sacrifice of clarity. No trace remains of the animosity common to Western writers on Islam of an earlier generation. On the contrary, the new tendency to inter-religious appreciation is well exemplified. The early chapters on Muhamad, the Quran, the foundation of Islam present a very fair picture which, indeed, makes it seem remarkable that the author continues to use the prejudicial and inaccurate terms 'Muhammadan' and 'Muhammadanism' instead of what he must know to be the correct designations: 'Muslim' and 'Islam'.

There is an appreciative survey of the great age of Islamic culture and civilisation and also a satisfactory chapter on Sufism,

As in most modern works on Islam, a great part of the book is devoted to the question of adaptation to modernism. In 'Buddhism and

Christianity in the Light of Hinduism', Arthur Osborne points out a very significant distinction between 'world-renouncing' and 'world-sanctifying' religions. Islam is an example of the latter type. It does not tell a man to give his property to the poor and become a religious mendicant but to do business honestly, how much to give in charity and who to, who to leave his property to when he dies, and a host of other matters which a world-renouncing religion at its origin, dismisses as 'the things that are Caesar's'. Therefore it set forth on its career with a divinely sponsored code of civil and criminal law. In some ways this may be an advantage, but it gravely complicates the question of adaptation to the changed circumstances of a new age. To mention only one point, a Buddhist or Christian may see no harm in taking interest on capital in modern financial conditions, but a Muslim is forbidden to do so by the Quran. As the present book shows, questions of law, faith, theology, the infallibility of the Quran, the status of the hadiths, are so interwoven that the question of degrees and modes of modernisation is almost insoluble. He also describes very sympathetically what is being done to solve it in various Islamic countries and by various Islamic writers today.

- ABDULLAH QUTBUDDIN.

VALMIKI MAHA RAMAYANA OR YOGA VASISHTA: Translated by S. V. Ganapathi. Published by the translator at 9-D, Edward Elliotts Road, Madras-4.

This is the translator's second volume on Nirvana. The first volume was published in Tamil in 1948. Sage Vasishtha presents to Sri Rama the state of Nirvana through many illustrations and anecdotes. Typical of them is the following:

"There is no trace of the sprout in the seed. The essence of seed pervades the seed; likewise the world phenomena are not experienced in Brahman. Brahman is without substance, form

or activity. Hence the world cannot be derived from Brahman. Expecting to see the world in Brahman is like expecting Mount Meru within the Atom. The wise as well as the ignorant perceive the world phenomena. The wise know they are all subject to constant changes and dissolution. They are dependent upon our imagination and are mere percepts. Hence we cannot call them Real or unreal. They appear before us like dreams and disappear when wisdom dawns." "Discard all doubts and with a courage bordering on recklessness, be a Great Doer, a Great Enjoyer and a Great Renouncer. Then one is established in great Renunciation."

It may be a useful book for those on the Path of Knowledge as taught by Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. The English is passable.

- T. K. S.

THE INCREDIBLE SAI BABA: By Arthur Osborne. (Orient Longmans, Calcutta, Rs. 5.00 and Riders, London, 12s. 6d.)

Sai Baba has become a legend. It is now nearly fifty years since he shed the physical sheath but his name and Samadhi continue to be an irresistible Power in the circle of his devotees. Many have claimed to be incarnations of Sai and developed rituals and practices which were unknown to the Baba of Shirdi. What was Baba really like? What was his teaching? What was his upasana, practice? These are some of the questions that have been answered in a satisfactory manner by Mr. Osborne in this interesting biography of the saint.

Apart from the many biographical details the author has assembled together from various accounts, this book gives an intimate glimpse into the saint's personality and the ways of working which were peculiarly his own. He used his supernatural powers in profusion and gave his devotees all they desired. He continues to do

so even now in a spectacular way. Learned men who shake their heads at these 'miracles' have something to ponder over in a remark of his on the matter: 'I give people what they want in the hope that they will begin to want what I want to give them.' (p. 100)

Sai Baba had no elaborate philosophy to teach, no intricate yogic discipline to prescribe. All that he asked for, as the author points out, was devotion to the Guru, self-surrender to the Guru who thereupon took charge of the aspirant and did what was needed to lend him to the Goal. In a brief analysis of the Teachings of three of the modern spiritual teachers, viz. Sri Ramakrishna, Sai Baba, Sri Ramana Maharshi, Mr. Osborne draws attention to certain common features which are significant: All three upheld the equal validity of all religions; provided for simple and direct paths that can be pursued in the conditions of modern life without formal renunciation of life in the world; and laid stress on utter devotion and surrender to the Guru as the main process. (pp.. 92-93)

The book is both absorbing and instructive.

- M. P. PANDIT.

THE RHYTHM OF HISTORY: By Arthur Osborne. (Orient Longmans. Rs. 2.75)

In this revealing study of the rise and fall of civilisations during the last two millennia and a half, the author shows how there is a pattern in history on a global scale. Historians are not all agreed on the precise significance of this pattern and Mr. Osborne is content to note that it only 'Implies that there is a divine or cosmic harmony shaping the affairs of man and that the ambitions of the great and the bungling of the unwise are merely instrumental, not causal.' (P, 129)

Beginning his survey with the founders of great Religious Systems about the fifth century B.C., e.g. Buddha, Confucius, Pythagoras, he records

the rise of classical Empires all over Asia and Europe followed by their decline culminating in what is known as the Dark Age; another curve of rise of civilisations through the Ages of Medievalism and the Renaissance was again followed by a downward movement which may be said to have reached its apogee in the last century. What is the likely outcome of all this mighty effort of Nature? How far have the East and the West, which seemed to have diverged from each other at one stage, come closer? These are some of the questions that are taken up for discussion in these pages.

While it may not be possible to agree with the writer in all his conclusions, it is certainly true - as he says - that 'the present materialistic civilisation is not the final answer because it has no inherent stability,' it is plundering the earth's resources too recklessly to endure, and the current of history has already begun to swing away from it.' (p. 130) What then is to replace this civilisation? A New Order which has been foreseen in all the traditions of the world and whose advent is very close to our present age. An able work persuasively written.

- M. P. PANDIT.

THE GOLDEN MASTER

(Composed by the eminent poet Harindranath Chattopadhyaya in the Ashram Hall, crowded with devotees on the night when death had claimed the body of Sri Ramana.)

Grief bath grown silent with its own excess
And will not weep lest it betray his trust
Even in this dark hour of dire distress
He lights the flame of knowledge through our dust.

Illumining its blindness wide and far
He glitters from his heaven of deathless grace.
In every speck and stone, in every star
We see the lonely wonder of his Face.

Ignorance rumours that our King departs
Where can he go, O where? - the being moans,
He who has made rich kingdoms of our hearts
And of our thoughts his countless jewelled thrones?

May he forgive our wavering faith, forgive
The folly of our doubts whose eyes are dim
How dare we move or breathe except through him?
How could we live if he should cease to live?

